

The View from Here: Perspectives on Educating About Archives

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Abstract

Seventy-five years of archival education activities across four complementary domains are reviewed and the most promising developments are noted. Topics addressed include an exploration of the state of graduate-level education, a critical look at several regional initiatives designed to widen the reach of archival training, a discussion of the importance of grassroots education, and an examination of Rare Book School as an intellectual and practical meeting ground for archivists, librarians, and other allied professionals.

New Culture of Scholarship: An Analysis of North American Archival Research Articles

Paul Conway

I am honored to be a part of the Society of American Archivists' 75th anniversary celebration. As with many of the veteran speakers at this year's Annual Meeting, I remember and am proud of participating in SAA's 50th anniversary conference. At that meeting, I presented the results of a census of archival

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organizations.¹ Today, I have some preliminary results from a census of another sort: research articles produced by archivists and archival scholars over the past ten years.

On this occasion where we are reflecting on the progress of the archival profession, archivists may be at an intellectual crossroads where the challenge of creating and sustaining a culture of scholarship may itself be a proxy for all of these past debates, some resolved, some perhaps submerged from view. Research is the hallmark of the academy, where theory-aware and hypothesis-driven inquiry is a mandate for the professorate, a primary criterion for tenure, a measure of personal prestige, and a catalyst for collaboration on problems that defy the efforts of a single intellectual.² Applied research, defined more loosely as open-minded and systematic investigation to solve new or existing problems, is a vital component of archival professional practice.³ As the archival education enterprise continues to grow and to establish its autonomy from professional practice, it becomes increasingly important to understand the role that research plays as a bridge between education and practice.⁴

The purpose of this article is to present an initial assessment of the research that archivists and archival educators have produced and reported in the form of research articles since the turn of the twenty-first century. The article establishes a context for this exploration in the North American journal literature and then mines this same literature for evidence of research productivity. It describes a methodology for identifying and assessing research literature in journal form, and applies the method to a selection of articles in three archival journals: *Archival Science*, *Archivaria*, and *American Archivist*. The article presents the results of the exploratory analysis and then reaches some preliminary conclusions on the state of research within the North American archival community, pointing, of course, to the need for more research in an international context.

Background

The value that archivists place on scholarship on archival issues is a major recurring theme in the seventy-five-year history of the Society of American Archivists—a theme rife with debates that at any given point in time appear

¹ Paul Conway, "Perspectives on Archival Resources: The 1985 Census of Archival Institutions," *American Archivist* 50 (Spring 1987): 174–191.

² Jaroslav Pelikan, *The Idea of the University: A Reexamination* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992).

³ Eric Ketelaar, "Archivistics Research Saving the Profession," *American Archivist* 63 (Fall/Winter 2000): 322–340.

⁴ Anne Gilliland-Swetland, "Archival Research: A 'New' Issue for Graduate Education," *American Archivist* 63 (Fall 2000): 258–270.

polarizing, but in retrospect seem to be a natural part of a maturing profession. Even a cursory glance at the North American archival literature, most notably the prescient review by Richard J. Cox,⁵ shows phenomenal advances in the production of new knowledge, in the dissemination of that knowledge in journals and other publication outlets, and in the sophistication with which archivists have considered the future course of the education of archivists.⁶ And yet, over the decades, archivists have carried on a published dialog on the place of research in advancing a theory of archives versus facilitating good practice,⁷ and on whether the proper focus of archival education should be on broad principles or on preparation for the workplace.⁸ Twenty-five years ago, Fredric M. Miller thought some of these debates had already been “talked out.”⁹ But evidence from a recent survey of *American Archivist* readers suggests that archivists are far from uniform in their perspectives on the value and usefulness of the archival literature to their work and their continuing education.¹⁰

Prior to 1970, archivally oriented research mostly focused on the nature of the records under the care of archival organizations. Literature produced by archivists in the first fifty years of the Society of American Archivists emphasized that historians did research and archivists studied the professional practices that made historical research possible. Reviewing the past in 1981, Harold T. Pinkett found no theoretical basis for the writings of American archivists. “American archival theory does not exist as a systematically formulated body of ideas. It is essentially an aggregation of ideas drawn from well-tested and widely accepted European archival principles, and of pragmatic concepts developed to meet special needs of American archival administration and democratic traditions.”¹¹

Writing in 1994 as editor of *American Archivist*, Cox expressed a concern that “there is virtually no substantial research going on in archival science.”¹² He

⁵ Richard J. Cox, “American Archival Literature: Expanding Horizons and Continuing Needs, 1901–1987,” *American Archivist* 50 (Summer 1987): 306–23.

⁶ Frank Burke, “The Future Course of Archival Theory in the United States,” *American Archivist* 44 (Winter 1981): 40–46

⁷ Terry Cook, “What Is Past Is Prologue: A History of Archival Ideas Since 1898, and the Future Paradigm Shift,” *Archivaria* 43 (Spring 1997): 17–63.

⁸ Richard J. Cox, “The Society of American Archivists and Graduate Education: Meeting at the Crossroads,” *American Archivist* 63 (Fall/Winter 2000): 368–379.

⁹ Fredric M. Miller, “The SAA as Sisyphus: Education since the 1960s,” *American Archivist* 63 (Fall/Winter 2000): 234–36.

¹⁰ Kathleen Fear and Paul Conway, “Valuing *American Archivist*: An Interpretation of SAA’s First Readership Survey,” *American Archivist* 74 (Fall/Winter 2011): 685–702.

¹¹ Harold T. Pinkett, “American Archival Theory: The State of the Art,” *American Archivist* 44 (Summer 1981): 222.

¹² Richard J. Cox, “Analysis of Archival Research, 1970–1992, and the Role and Function of the *American Archivist*,” *American Archivist* 57 (Spring 1994): 279.

quote with strong approval Mary Sue Stephenson's prediction about the growth of research in the context of archival education, claiming that at the time there existed no wall between research and practice. Cox wrote that "until proved otherwise, the future source of research on archival matters will be the increasingly comprehensive graduate archival education programs in North America." Cox's concern about the lack of substantial research went beyond the state of archival education to encompass the lack of opportunities and reward mechanisms for undertaking research. His article provides a review of research published in North American archival journals since 1970, a date he chose arbitrarily.

In her own work, Mary Sue Stephenson defined the wall that limits archival research in terms of the divide between academic research and research by practitioners. She argued that the establishment of academically based professional education tends to create a barrier based on the diversity of cultures. "And in between they have built a wall—a big, thick, ugly wall full of dents from the occasional rocks they throw at each other. Practitioners live on one side, educators/academics live on the other."¹³ It may be that Stephenson and Cox were worrying needlessly or prematurely at that time, for in the early 1990s there was little in the way of an archival professoriate to throw its share of rocks.

The capacity of the archival community to undertake research has expanded dramatically since the last decade of the twentieth century, due in large measure to the growth of archival scholars located in academic departments of research universities. In 1981, Frank Burke issued the clarion call for archival professionals to leave their desks and decamp to the academy, arguing that the future of the profession turned on the growth of a dedicated faculty.¹⁴ Building on Burke's perspective, I wrote an article in 1988 that made the case for creating a critical mass of full-time faculty conducting research on archival issues and teaching the next generation of archivists from a mature research literature.¹⁵ When I wrote, there were nine full-time faculty in archival education. Richard Cox and his colleagues identified twenty full-time faculty in 2000.¹⁶ Analyzing the responses to the A*CENSUS, Elizabeth Yakel and Jeannette Bastian identified thirty-five

¹³ Mary Sue Stephenson, "Deciding Not to Build the Wall: Research and the Archival Profession," *Archivaria* 32 (Summer 1991): 14.

¹⁴ Frank Burke, "The Future Course of Archival Theory in the United States," *American Archivist* 44 (Winter 1981): 40–46.

¹⁵ Paul Conway, "Archival Education and the Need for Full-time Faculty," *American Archivist* 51 (Summer 1988): 254–263.

¹⁶ Richard J. Cox, Elizabeth Yakel, David Wallace, Jeannette Bastian, and Jennifer Marshall, "Archival Education at the Millennium: The Status of Archival Education in North American Library and Information Science Schools," *Library Quarterly* 71/2 (April 2001).

academics in 2006.¹⁷ This year (2011) the Archival Education and Research Institute (AERI) just gathered eighty-five doctoral students and academic faculty to explore the possibilities for sustaining a culture of scholarship and teaching dedicated to archival science. Prospects for increasing the size and dynamics of the AERI community are bright.¹⁸ By any measure, these figures represent extraordinary growth in the archival academy.

Research Design

Picking up where other reviews of the archival literature leave off, this article reports on an assessment of archival research published in journal form since 2000. This point of departure coincides with the outcome of a summit meeting of archival educators in 1999 that had surveyed the state of the archival research literature and declared the importance of increasing the scope and variety of such literature. This summit meeting was reported in a special edition of *American Archivist* in 2000¹⁹ and led Anne Gilliland and Sue McKemmish to propose an important conceptual framework for understanding research on archival issues, which informs the design of the present study.²⁰ The year 2000 also is in the immediate wake of the re-publication of Carol Couture and Daniel Ducharme's path-breaking study of the archival research literature in North America, which provides an additional and complementary framework for assessing the archival research literature.²¹

This investigation of archival research literature was designed to explore how feasible it was first to define "archival research," then identify articles that meet the definition, and then and only then describe some of the characteristics of the research contained therein.

For purposes of this pilot study, "archival research" is: 1) an investigation on archival issues in a combination of the Gilliland/McKemmish and the Couture/Ducharme frameworks; 2) conducted/authored by self-identified archival scholars, other scholars who explicitly draw on archival theory or practice, or practitioners who self-identify as professional archivists; and 3) original and

¹⁷ A*CENSUS (Archival Census and Educational Needs Study in the United States), Part 4: Graduate Archival Education (Elizabeth Yakel and Jeannette Bastian): 349–366 in *American Archivist* 69 (Winter/Fall 2006): 358.

¹⁸ Archival Education and Research Institute, <http://aeri.gseis.ucla.edu/>.

¹⁹ Richard J. Cox, "The Society of American Archivists and Graduate Education: Meeting at the Crossroads," *American Archivist* 63 (Fall/Winter 2000): 368–379.

²⁰ Anne Gilliland and Sue McKemmish, "Building an Infrastructure for Archival Research," *Archival Science* 4 (2004): 149–197.

²¹ Carol Couture and Daniel Ducharme, "Research in Archival Science: A Status Report," *Archivaria* 59 (2005): 41–67. Reprinted from *Archives* 30, nos. 3–4 (1998–1999): 11–38.

systematic, contextualized in a body of knowledge, with an explicit methodology, whose evidence is organized and presented as a question or hypothesis, with conclusions reached based on the investigation. The definition excluded essays, purely theoretical treatises without explicit research method, reportorial case studies, literature reviews, and review essays. The research reported here recognizes at the outset that some very significant archival research is published in multiple forms, including books, white papers, directly to the web, and other informal ways. The focus of this study is on journals because of the fundamental validation of quality that derives from the scholarly communication processes of peer-review.

With this definition in hand, the project reviewed the entire contents of three peer-reviewed journals from 2001 through 2011: *American Archivist*, *Archival Science*, and *Archivaria*. I counted the articles, identified those that met the definition, and read them as thoroughly as needed to determine the scope and substance of the research. The core subset of articles in these journals was relatively easy to determine because the editors of each publication tended to flag them as research articles and clustered them explicitly in a given issue, separate from contributions such as review articles and organizational documents. Most of the articles that I reviewed had a fairly clear methodology; an expressed methodology for assessing assembled information is the most important distinguishing characteristic of a research article. The author is effectively saying to the reader: “This is the problem and here is what I’m going to do to get to the bottom of it.”

The weakness of the research method lies in introducing a bias in the selection of research articles for analysis—my definition might not match your definition of what research is and how it is reported. The research articles identified are almost universally oriented toward positivistic research, which is often theory-driven, data-oriented, and consisting of a hypothesis, data/evidence gathered, and some type of outcome that may or may not be prescriptive. Positivistic research tends to sidestep interpretivist perspectives, which assemble information in an exploratory way to build theory from the ground up.

For each article identified, I coded sixteen data points, of which summaries of the following data points will be reported:

- year of publication,
- role and country of residence of the first author,
- field of research,
- geographic orientation of the research,
- research method, and
- era of the research topic.

Given the experimental nature of this project, I did not consider it essential to dig deeply into the findings of the research or judge the quality of the

researcher's efforts. There is plenty of space for follow-up studies that may code articles in different ways or expose more of the substance of the research completed.

Findings

The three journals published 417 articles over an eleven-year period. Excluded from this overall total are individual book reviews, editorial prefaces, and supplemental materials. **Table 1** shows that of these 417 articles 147 of them qualify as research articles according to the established selection criteria. *Archival Science* published the most articles (182) of the three journals and accounts for over 43 percent of the articles analyzed. *American Archivist* can claim the largest proportion of its total articles published as research articles (40.3 percent). The difference in the proportion of research articles published is best accounted for by the relatively large number of essays and review articles that the other two journals publish.

Table 1 also displays the country of origin of the first author. By this measure, *American Archivist*, as its title would suggest, is populated by American archivists writing for the premier American archival journal. *Archivaria*, the journal of the Association of Canadian Archivists, is not quite as strongly populated by Canadians as a proportion of the whole. *Archival Science* is the most international journal by a very large margin. This international character also is reflected in the composition of the editorial board.

Table 1. Distribution of Research Articles in Three Archival Journals

	Articles Published		Research Articles		First Author Country		
	Total	Percent	Total	Proportion	Country	Number	Percent
Archivaria	116	27.8%	31	26.7%	Canada	20	64.5%
Archival Science	182	43.6%	68	37.4%	USA	24	35.3%
American Archivist	119	28.5%	48	40.3%	USA	41	85.4%
	417	100%	147	35.3%		85	

Table 2 presents a summary of the findings regarding the primary role of the first author. Of the 147 research articles analyzed, academics account for the vast majority (80.4 percent) of first authors. Academics consist of authors who are either faculty, doctoral students, or master's students. For this pilot study, I did not distinguish between faculty scholars and the students they supervise. In many cases, the choice of topic or research method is often driven by the research

of the faculty advisor or classroom instructor. Beyond the preponderance of faculty and students, the analysis surfaced that among first authors was fifteen archival administrators, twelve archivists, and two independent consultants. Of the 147 articles assessed, 103 (70 percent) are single-authored works. Additionally, fifteen authors account for almost 30 percent of all the first authors represented in the study.

Table 2. Primary Role of First Author

	Articles	Percent
Academic (faculty and students)	118	80.4%
Administrator	15	10.2%
Archivist	12	8.2%
Consultant	2	1.4%
	147	

Table 3 sorts the research articles by year of publication across all three journals and places the results in two groups. For the first five years of the study period (2001–2005), typically seven to ten research articles appeared per year total across all three journals.

Table 3. Articles in Three Journals by Year of Publication

Year	Total	Research	Proportion
2001	41	14	34.1%
2002	32	7	21.9%
2003	33	7	21.2%
2004	30	9	30.0%
2005	47	6	12.8%
Total	183	43	23.5%
2006	46	18	39.1%
2007	31	17	54.8%
2008	48	15	31.3%
2009	45	12	26.7%
2010	44	34	77.3%
2011	20	8	40.0%
Total	234	104	44.4%

Overall, there was growth in the quantity of research published in these journals. Starting in 2010, there appears to be a burst of activity, and I see no prospects for abatement in the number or distribution of research articles across the three journals. At the time of this presentation in 2011, there were still six

issues of these three journals yet to be released, and yet eight research articles had been published. It seems the archival research gold rush is on.

In **Table 4**, three complementary views of the field of research are presented. The coding is derived from Gilliland and McKemish’s proposal for the range of possible areas of archival practice that might be amenable to systematic research, but is also informed by Couture and Ducharme’s analytical framework.²² Each article assessed was coded for a single field of research, which focuses the analysis but possibly limits the richness of any particular research article. Of the 147 articles analyzed, forty (27.2 percent) are principally studies of particular archival functions. Typical functions include description, preservation, reference, access, use, and exhibits. Archival reference and use studies, mostly utilizing survey research methods, account for eighteen of the forty functional research studies. The remainder were fairly widely distributed across other archival functions. This small finding reinforces the impact of the plethora of advocacy articles in the 1980s and 1990s that called for greater attention to the users of archives.

Thirty-nine articles (26.5 percent) had records and recordkeeping as the focus of the study and another relatively large cluster of articles (19.0 percent) centered on issues of archives and society. Other foci included: the role of archives in history; the management of archival programs; media, especially digital media; and research on electronic records. Research on education itself, especially in the last decade, is a growing field.

Table 4. Research Articles Coded for the Field of Research

Functions	
Recordkeeping	39
Society	28
History	12
Management	11
Media	7
Education	6
Aim on AS	4
	147

Functions	
Reference/Use	18
Description	9
Appraisal	6
Records Management	3
Preservation	3
Exhibits	1
	40

	Functions	Recordkeeping	Society
Archivaria	6	14	4
American Archivist	30	1	5
Archival Science	4	24	20
	40	39	29

²² Gilliland and McKemish, 2004; Couture and Ducharme, 2005.

Finally, Table 4 shows the relative emphasis in the three most popular fields of research across the three journals. There is a different emphasis in each of the journals, which goes not explicitly toward the editorial policy, but perhaps to the group of editors who choose and solicit the articles for publication. *American Archivist* is very strongly focused on the practical functions of archives: thirty of the forty research articles on archival functions were published in *American Archivist*. In contrast, *Archival Science* and *Archivaria* tend to focus on records and recordkeeping and issues of archives and society, which are fields of study most amenable to a theoretically based positivist approach to archival research. This varying emphasis is fairly striking and emphasizes the varying perspectives of the editorial boards. Archivists need to read all three journals regularly to obtain a broad and balanced view of research on archival issues.

Table 5 displays the research articles by geographic area, east to west around the world starting with the International Date Line. There is a lot going on here. The first column, which shows the residence of first authors tells the story that globalization of archival publishing is a native-English-language phenomenon. Residents of Australia, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, Canada, and the United States account for 127 of the 147 research articles (86.3 percent). If the study were expanded to archival journals in other parts of the world, I would venture a hypothesis that cross-language and cross-boundary publication is no more prevalent than it is in English-language archival journals.

Table 5. Geographic Distribution of First Author Residence, Field of Study, Recordkeeping

Region	First Author Residence		Geographic Area of Study			Recordkeeping	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Continent	Number	Percent
Australia/NZ	8	5.4%	6	4.1%	4.1%	4	10.3%
Asia/Pacific	0	0.0%	8	5.4%	5.4%	0	0.0%
Near/Middle East	1	0.7%	1	0.7%	0.7%	1	2.6%
Europe	26	17.7%	30	20.4%	27.2%	18	46.2%
UK	9		10	6.8%			
Africa	1	0.7%	2	1.4%	1.4%	0	0.0%
North America	110	74.8%	9	6.1%	54.4%	14	35.9%
Canada	38		23	15.6%			
USA	72		48	32.7%			
South America	1	0.7%	4	2.7%	2.7%	1	2.6%
World			4	2.7%	2.7%	1	2.6%
None			2	1.4%	1.4%		
Total	266		147			39	

Globalization of archival research is less parochial when it comes to area of study. Only two of the research studies examined did not have an explicit geographical area of concentration. **Table 5** shows that North American authors account for three-quarters of all the authors represented, but that North American topics are at the heart of just over half of the research articles. Simply put, North American authors seem more wide-ranging in their choice of regions of study than either European or Australian-based authors. This basic perspective on global archival research carries over somewhat into the choice of topics. Research on the nature of records and recordkeeping, which is the largest single group of research studies, is dominated by authors residing in Europe or Australia. As **Table 5** also indicates, Australian authors are quite different in their perspective, tending to emphasize Australian-oriented studies when writing for non-Australian journals. Further research that includes a wider range of archival publications is needed to determine the extent of globalization beyond the boundaries of residence and language.

Research method is a combination of overall research data strategy (quantitative, qualitative, or mixed) and specific techniques for gathering appropriate data. The coding of archival research articles is complicated by debates in the larger academic community regarding the classification of research methods,²³ and by discussions with the community of archival scholars over research methods appropriate for research on archival issues.²⁴ **Table 6** shows the distribution of assigned codes for research strategy and technique. Of the 147 articles analyzed, qualitative research is the dominant data strategy. This broad category includes case and field studies, action, research, developmental studies, and research that is either historical in character or that uses archival records to say something about archival processes and procedures. In archival studies, quantitative strategy is almost exclusively survey research. Only four out of the forty quantitative studies adhere to a rigorous science/social science model of research, where a hypothesis is stated clearly from prior research, where quantitative data addresses that hypothesis, and where the data is analyzed with appropriate statistical tests of significance. Only five of the 147 research articles examined claimed and demonstrated a mixed/multiple research methods approach, perhaps best explained by the limits in length and complexity imposed by the journal article style.

²³ John W. Creswell, *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches* (Los Angeles: Sage, 2009).

²⁴ Gilliland and McKemish, 2004.

Table 6. Research Strategies and Methods

Qualitative	102
Historical	43
Archival	25
Case and Field	25
Action	2
Developmental	2
Other	5
Quantitative	40
Correlational	2
Quasi-experimental	2
Survey research	36
Mixed	5
	147

The issue of archival and historical research methods is complicated and controversial. For purposes of this experimental study, historical methodologies are employed when researchers are using the content of the archival holdings to discover something about the past. They are acting as historians utilizing archival records under their care or accessible to them. Archival research occurs when scholars are using the records of the archival organization, such as administrative records, donor records, records of use, or finding aids, as the source of information for the article. **Table 6** shows that archivists do much historical research using the archival record under their care. Almost 30 percent of all the research articles analyzed used a historical research methodology as its primary strategy.

Table 7. Historical and Archival Research Methods Compared

		Historical	Archival
Middle Ages (1200–1500)		3	1
Early Modern (1500–1800)		13	2
Late Modern (1800–1920)		19	7
Contemporary (1920–)		8	15
		43	25
	Early Modern	Late Modern	Contemporary
Education	1	0	0
Functions	0	0	3
History	1	5	4
Management	0	1	1
Records	9	2	4
Society	2	11	3
Total	13	19	15

The focus of historical and archival research by archivists comes into clearer relief when these studies are plotted in terms of the time frame of their analysis. **Table 7** shows that a relatively large volume of research articles in the three journals concern the nature of records and recordkeeping or issues of archives and society in early- and late-modern time frames. Work on twentieth-century recordkeeping practices from a historical perspective is also a popular topic of research in the archival community. This work is mostly being done with the use of the records of archival agencies themselves.

Tentative Conclusions

My first conclusion, far from tentative, is that the findings reported here raise a number of important questions about the methodology of identifying, reading, coding, and interpreting research articles. Revising and then replicating or extending the study, perhaps by expanding the time frame and geographic reach or by loosening the strictures on articles that are less data oriented, will lead to richer and fully reliable conclusions about fields, methods, and global reach of archival research.²⁵ Since no effort was expended on assessing the actual findings of the published research, it is impossible to determine at this point in time what archival scholars have truly learned about archival issues in their research. Any effort to determine the reach and impact of archival research, either within a single community or globally, must add a bibliometric component that traces citations across discrete research articles. Bibliographic network analysis has matured as a research method, so it is likely time to apply this method more aggressively to the archival literature. The Archival Education and Research Institute (AERI) is taking up the analysis of the worldwide archival literature as a priority activity.²⁶ Future reports from the AERI community are likely to expand the analysis to encompass literatures in other countries and to expand the purview of research to encompass conference proceedings, books, white papers and other forms of scholarly distribution.

The exploratory study reported exposes the moat that surrounds the academy of archival scholars, where most of the clearly identifiable research is conducted from the professional field where research findings should be applied in practice. This chasm is not the hostility-prone wall that that Stephenson saw in 1991, but rather two world views, where one community barely recognizes the relevance of the other's work. Scholars work in fields of convenience to gather

²⁵ Patty Condon, a doctoral candidate at Simmons College, has completed an unreported study with parameters similar to the one reported here.

²⁶ AERI Literature Analysis Project, 2012. <http://aeri2012.wordpress.com/conference-schedule/aeri-literature-analysis-project/>

data and contextualize their research questions, but do not necessarily develop research frameworks that are oriented toward influencing practice. For their part, archivists seem not particularly itchy to adapt research findings from the academy in their administrative practices and are generally not doing the sort of practice-based, but fairly rigorous, research that we see in the areas of digital libraries and digital preservation. A deeper investigation of the influences in the archival literature is required to determine whether this apparent divide between archival scholars and practitioners is a real barrier or just an artifact of publication patterns.

In academia, the demands of the tenure process are clearly driving the need to publish in archival journals. Academic promotion is driving the choice of methods and it is driving the choice of publication venues. There is an increasing trend to publish outside the archival field, in journals with greater readership or more measurable scholarly impact. So not all good archival research is necessarily addressed to the archival communities that can best benefit from it. The consequence of this increasing diversity of venues is that archival theories and archival knowledge seeps into the mindsets of other academic disciplines. Perhaps an unintended consequence of wider publication patterns is the threat to archival journals in terms of documenting and embracing innovative research methods and deeply hewed critical thinking about archival issues.

In the context of SAA's 75th anniversary, I believe this research, albeit preliminary and tentative, offers an opportunity for celebration. Allow me to personalize my final point. When I embarked on graduate coursework in the administration of archives in 1978, I had the good fortune to enroll in a course at the University of Michigan taught, for the first time, by then associate director of the Bentley Historical Library, Francis X. Blouin. In the brilliance of thirty-three years of hindsight, it is clear that the education for professional archivists has been transformed through the emergence of a rich and thoughtful research literature on archival issues. The syllabus that Blouin presented to his students, a copy of which I always distribute to my graduate students at the Michigan's School of Information, was bereft of substantive literature written by archivists about the deeper challenges of doing archival work and thinking archivally about our human condition. We read little that could be construed as research along the lines that I have described today; instead we read historical studies and classic administrative treatises.

In the decades since, the archival profession has advanced a sophisticated educational enterprise built on spires of excellent writing that is a joy to read. An international community of scholar-researchers is emerging that is focused squarely on rich methodological exploration of archival issues that does not deny its roots in historical research techniques. In spite of some nagging

questions about whether archivists use the research they sponsor, read the research they publish, or utilize the findings to change practice, we should offer ourselves hearty congratulations after 75 years of progress as a professional association of archivists.

Delivering Archival Education to a Broader Audience

Brenda S. Banks

In recent years, the archives profession has seen the proliferation of advanced-level archives studies throughout the United States. Scholarship opportunities and top-level faculty appointments at universities attract prospective students. More importantly, employers are beginning to give preference to those with advanced degrees in archival studies in hiring selections.

Even with the success of archival studies programs, the archives profession still grapples with the most logical placement of these advanced programs. Many are in library schools, some are in history departments, while others enjoy a connection with information science programs. Even more challenging is the scarce geographical placement of the programs throughout the United States. Because of these issues, program identity and accessibility continue to pose barriers for many potential students.

Despite these and other challenges, advanced archival studies programs are thriving and producing some of the best-prepared employees in the field in decades. Why, then, with all of these advances, do archives institutes still exist? What are they and what purpose do they serve?

Although the United States has seen growth of graduate archival programs in the last several years, the programs are still not located proportionally throughout the country. Many persons seeking basic archival education are not willing or able to leave existing jobs and move to another state or region to acquire another degree. Still others simply cannot afford it. Applicants for advanced archival degree programs are likely to be recent college graduates, and while this is NOT a problem, it does eliminate a large segment of the population wishing to enter the profession or to become more proficient in existing positions in archives.

Institutes are generally institutionally based, nonprofit, limited-time educational programs that provide a basic introduction to archival work. Most applicants to archives institutes are people who have been thrust into the job of caring for collections, those seeking entry-level professional or paraprofessional positions, or volunteers. Many of the applicants have advanced degrees in other fields and do not have the mobility to move to another state or region to attend

a two-year graduate program. Those seeking to enter archives institutes are most likely, but not always, from small community-based organizations or from underserved communities.

My experience has been with the Georgia Archives Institute (GAI) and the Historically Black Colleges and Universities Archives Institute. I was a student in GAI in 1975 and became a member of the board of directors in the late 1980s. For the last fifteen years, I have served as chair of the board of directors, which includes archivists from Atlanta-area repositories. GAI began in 1967, when Carroll Hart, the director of the Georgia Archives from the early sixties to 1982, was desperate to find a way to provide training for newly hired staff and provide more professional training for existing staff. Modeled in part after the National Archives Modern Archives Institute, which began in 1945, GAI was a four-week program, and included two to three weeks of classroom training and one week of field trips to other repositories and historic sites throughout the state.

After a couple of years, the program gained a large following with requests from other local repositories to include their staff. It continued to grow in popularity and eventually attracted applicants from the Southeast as well as throughout the United States, its territories, and Europe.

GAI eventually was shortened to two weeks, which includes six days of classroom training and a three-day internship in various Atlanta repositories. We limit participants to twenty and have a competitive application process. We select faculty from top archival education programs with the goal of providing the best basic archives education for those seeking an introduction to the profession.

Today, GAI is a nonprofit corporation that requires a modest tuition fee and receives additional sponsorship from the Georgia Archives, the Society of Georgia Archivists, and the Auburn Avenue Library for African American Culture and History. Competitive scholarships to the institute are offered by the Society of Georgia Archivists and the Friends of the Georgia Archives.

Celebrating its forty-fifth year in 2012, GAI continues to attract more applicants that we can accept in any given year. Throughout the institute, participants are encouraged to seek additional training through workshops sponsored by state and regional archival organizations, as well as those sponsored by SAA. They also are given information about advanced academic programs.

The Historically Black Colleges and Universities Archives Institute (HBCU AI), funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities and administered through Spelman College, ran from 1999 to 2004. Originally intended to be a two-year program accepting a maximum of twenty participants each year, the HBCU AI was extended three additional years to meet the

demand. The faculty was selected from some of the nation's best archival professionals and educators.

HBCU AI was designed to provide basic archives training for staff of HBCUs who inherited the job of caring for collections or were recently hired to serve as college archivist, but lacked appropriate experience and/or training. Almost all applicants had advanced degrees in other areas including, but not limited to, history and library science.

Prior to writing the proposal for the HBCU AI, the NEH challenged me to develop a program that might serve as a model that could be adapted to other underserved communities. I drew upon my experience with GAI as well as the Preservation Institute that I attended in the mid 1980s.

The purpose of the HBCU AI project was to:

- Provide training that would support the preservation of the valuable collections in HBCUs.
- Provide high-quality basic archives training for staff of HBCUs.
- Introduce HBCU staff to the archival profession and to further the effort of increasing diversity within the archival profession.
- Provide a model for underserved communities for increasing access to archival education and training.

The program was designed to provide learning opportunities through several different components. In order to achieve the optimal learning opportunities, participants:

- Attended three weeks of classroom training over a one-year period based in Atlanta.
- Completed projects designed to enhance their archives program following each week of class. Projects were evaluated by faculty.
- Received consultation visits to help assess their archives programs, address issues and set goals.
- Were assigned mentors in their areas who were committed to assist them on a continuing basis.
- Were given partial funding to attend the SAA Annual Meeting.

In addition, meetings were held with the college administrators during the consultation visits to discuss the importance of their collections and the need for support for the archives and continued professional development for the staff. During the application phase, the administrators were required to agree to the terms of the applicant's participation in the program, which included support for attending SAA Annual Meetings.

The HBCU Archives Institute was successful in achieving all of its goals. During its five-year run, the institute provided training for just over 100

participants representing 85 percent of the 117 HBCUs in the country and served as a model for the Native American Archives Institute. Leveraged by the HBCU AI, a one-week training program for archives assistants and paraprofessionals was funded by the Mellon Foundations.

In a recent issue of *American Archivist*, the article “Educating for the Archival Multiverse”²⁷ discusses why “a pluralist approach might help to achieve greater diversity and cultural sensitivity in practice and scholarship.” Although this article deals with discussions mostly within the academic setting, the same approach could be extended to include ways to provide a wider variety of education and training options to underserved communities.

The full impact of the HBCU Archives Institute, Native American Archives Institute, Georgia Archives Institute, Western Archives Institute, and other similar training programs has yet to be measured.

These archival institutes will continue to be an integral part of the archives education matrix by making available convenient and affordable training options for those communities that need it most.

Although they cannot be compared to graduate education in terms of their essence or in terms of their impact, institutes do have a place in archival education and training. Archival institute administrators will need to continue to work closely with archival educators to develop ways that the two approaches might complement each other. This partnership will be integral in our ability to continue to provide quality training for those communities where graduate archival education may not be a viable option.

The Western Archives Institute: Meeting the Need for Grassroots Education Across the West (and Beyond)

Nancy Zimmerman Lenoil

We have gathered at this meeting to celebrate the 75th anniversary of SAA, to look back at the profession, to see where we are, and to look forward to the future. In this session, we are looking at archival education. My colleagues on this panel are addressing archival research and education, the regional initiatives designed to widen the reach of archival training, and the experience of Rare Book School as a meeting ground for archivists, librarians, and other allied professionals. Brenda Banks discussed characteristics of institutes. There are

²⁷ The Archival Education and Research Institute (AERI), Pluralizing the Archival Curriculum Group (PACG), “Educating for the Archival Multiverse,” *American Archivist* 74 (Spring/Summer 2011): 69–101.

many similarities in our presentations. I will discuss one specific program as an example of “grassroots” archival education.

There has been a long and continuing debate over the nature of archival training. Paul Conway referred to the “talked-out debates,” among them history versus library and information studies education. To set the stage for my talk, I want to briefly review the evolution of archival education. In an article about the history and evolution of archival education, Frank B. Evans wrote in *American Archivist* in 1977²⁸ that there have been three major—and conflicting—themes regarding the character, extent, and organizational placement of archival training. His first theme, dating back to European traditions, was that archivists should be trained as academic historians. The Modern Archives Institute,²⁹ which began as an academic program at American University, initially followed the academic tradition and offered credits. The second theme was that library schools were the proper place for archival training because they were more concerned with methodology and the creation of records. Evans described the third theme as “self-help,” where in the 1970s a number of regional archival associations developed and began offering workshops and holding annual meetings sessions that provided training.³⁰

Evans wrote that academic programs, whether in history departments or library schools, would continue to be important, but for him, the most important thing was that archivists receive formal training. Based on his experience as an instructor and codirector of the Modern Archives Institute, Evans concluded, “Since most persons appointed to archival positions in recent years are not interested in earning academic credit, training can be offered by any institution or organization, provided those who conduct the training have themselves been trained or had extensive experience with both archives and manuscripts.”³¹ Since the Evans article, there has been a notable shift in the profession. Appointment to archival positions generally require academic training. The increase in the number and success of graduate education programs reflects the demand for formal, academic education. At the same time there continues to be a need for formal, basic education that is provided by short-term archival institutes.

Based on his experience with the successful Modern Archives Institute, Evans called on the Society of American Archivists to establish a basic training

²⁸ Frank B. Evans, “Post-appointment Archival Training: A Proposed Solution for a Basic Problem,” *American Archivist* 40 (January 1977): 57–74

²⁹ “Modern Archives Institute,” The U.S. National Archives and Records Administration, <http://www.archives.gov/preservation/modern-archives-institute/>.

³⁰ Evans, 57–74.

³¹ Evans, 72.

program, a short institute, taught by a faculty of experienced practitioners. He envisioned a program that, because it was not tied to an academic program, could be moved around the country and cosponsored by state or regional organizations. Such an institute, Evans believed, would meet the needs of persons in smaller repositories and the middle and lower-grade professionals in our larger ones. These staff members did not usually attend the academic-based archival courses or get sent to the existing institutes in Washington and elsewhere.

What Evans envisioned in his article in 1977 exists today as three institutes: the Modern Archives Institute, the Georgia Archives Institute, and the Western Archives Institute. All provide formal, basic archival education that might be called “grassroots” training.

The Modern Archives Institute, which started as an academic program in 1945, today provides “an introduction to archival principles” and is “intended to help archivists acquire basic knowledge about caring for archival materials and making them available.” Modern Archives Institute participants usually have limited archival experience.³²

The second program in the eastern United States is the Georgia Archives Institute.³³ Established in 1967, the program provides beginning archivists, manuscript curators, and librarians with general information in the basic concepts and practices of archival administration.

My focus today is the third program, the Western Archives Institute,³⁴ which was established in 1986. Although modeled after the other two institutes, it is somewhat different in that it provides training to both post-appointment archivists and also to individuals who are caring for archival materials as only a part of their job and would not consider themselves archivists.

In the 1980s, the Society of California Archivists (SCA) formed a committee to look at issues facing the archival profession. One of the findings of the committee was that there was a lack of intermediate archival education in the western region. SCA was presenting one- or two-day basic archives workshops and there were a few graduate education programs in history departments or library schools around the country that specialized in archives education. But there was nothing for individuals who needed more than a one- or two-day workshop, or for those whom graduate education was not suited or not a possibility.

³² “Modern Archives Institute,” The U.S. National Archives and Records Administration, <http://www.archives.gov/preservation/modern-archives-institute/>.

³³ “The Georgia Archives Institute,” <http://www.georgiaarchivesinstitute.org/>.

³⁴ “The Western Archives Institute,” The Society of American Archivists, <http://www2.archivists.org/assoc-orgs/western-archives-institute>.

Importantly, there were few opportunities for graduate archival education in the West.

As a result of the committee's findings, SCA and the California State Archives formed a partnership to fill the gap by creating the Western Archives Institute, often referred to as WAI, which was to become the only program of its kind in the western United States to provide an intensive, basic introduction to archives management. WAI is managed by staff from the California State Archives with assistance from a management committee that handles the program's local arrangements and on-site coordination. WAI was initially funded by SCA and within a few years became financially self-sustaining.

SCA and WAI recognized that there are different archival communities in the West and that they were not all being well-served. Some examples of the target audience include individuals who care for archival materials as only part of their job, such as librarians with public history collections. Some have a graduate degree in another field, such as museum professionals working in institutions with archival collections, historical society employees and volunteers, city clerks caring for historical records, and librarians in public and private libraries, K–12 schools, colleges, and universities. Others work in the archives of major corporations such as Pixar Animation, Apple Computer, and Bank of America. WAI also was intended to serve career archivists who might not have formal archival education.

WAI is an intensive, two-week basic introduction to archival theory and practice. It is held once every summer alternating regularly between college campuses in northern and southern California. A principal faculty member teaches “core” sessions, such as arrangement and description, and selected other sessions of their choosing. Principal faculty members are always leading archives educators and have included David B. Gracy II from the University of Texas at Austin, Timothy Ericson from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, Terry Eastwood from the University of British Columbia, and Helen Tibbo from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Archivists with specialized subject knowledge and from the local area or from within the western region serve as adjunct faculty for other topics. The program features site visits to local repositories where participants can get a feel for how different programs function and how theory is put into practice.

WAI participants learn the basics of such topics as arrangement and description, appraisal, reference and access, preservation, outreach and public relations, electronic records, and starting and managing an archives program. They receive hands-on training in arrangement and preservation. Care is taken to ensure that participants learn how a variety of institutions operate—recognizing that not everyone comes from large, well-funded organizations. Participants are

repeatedly reminded that the program is a basic introduction and they are encouraged to seek other continuing education and graduate archival education when possible.

Participants are encouraged to live on-campus to foster the spirit of camaraderie and mutual exchange. A great deal of informal learning occurs after the students leave the classroom at the end of the day. Participants leave the program knowing that their fellow students will be good resources for the future after they return to their hometowns.

The 2011 program held in July was the twenty-fifth WAI. Over the past twenty-five years, there have been almost 800 participants who have attended the program. Although the majority of participants have been from California and the western region, there also have been attendees from across the United States as well as a number of other countries including the Philippines, Greece, Palau, Mexico, Japan, Canada, and the Bahamas.

Now I would like to describe a unique effort to provide grassroots archival education to Native American and tribal archivists, and discuss why grassroots education also is essential to preserving our national historical heritage.

In 2003, WAI planners and administrators became aware of one community that not only needed the services of an archives education program but had cultural practices and experiences requiring somewhat different instruction. SCA and California State Archives, the cosponsors of WAI, partnered with the Nevada State Library and Archives and the First Archivists Circle to create a Western Archives Institute for Native American and Tribal Archivists. This institute was built on the framework of WAI to provide an intensive, two-week introduction to the management, use, and preservation of historical records with particular attention paid to issues unique to Native American tribal records. When using the term "Native American," it is intended to encompass the records of all Native American peoples. For example, there were program participants who were caring for Native Hawaiian records. The project relied heavily on two elements: the lengthy experience in operating WAI and extensive consultation with Native American subject specialists.

Two grants from the National Historical Publications and Records Commission (NHPRC) helped make this institute possible. One grant provided funding for planning while the other provided monies for administration of the institute. The total project costs were \$99,332, of which \$47,697 came from NHPRC and \$51,635 were in-kind costs shared by the California and Nevada State Archives.

Timothy Ericson from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee was experienced in archival education for Native American groups, and tailored the existing WAI curriculum to focus on Native American tribal records. He also served

as the principal faculty member for the program. In developing the curriculum, Ericson was guided by a core committee of WAI administrators, planners, and Native American tribal archivists. The specialized curricula had to be broad enough to encompass traditional archival principles, but flexible enough to recognize the unique needs and conditions of tribal archives.

Beyond including basic archival principles and practices, the curriculum took into consideration cultural attitudes about records. For example, Native American records are sometimes viewed as “living documents” equal to a living person. As such, they are allowed to live out their natural life and are not preserved. There also was recognition that tribal governments are sovereign governments and U.S. laws do not necessarily apply, such as access to “public records.” Another distinction was that tribal archives are often part of cultural centers and libraries. Yet another element that was included was an understanding that tribal archives are often part of a political process, with appointments based on political patronage and subject to change with elected personnel.

The process of applicant selection was of great concern to the Native American community. There were feelings among some of the Native American subject specialists that the program should be reserved for Native Americans only. However, there are archivists caring for Native American records who are not Native American and they needed to be served as well. The institute followed the model established by the previous Western Archives Institutes, where the primary target audience was the group of people who have an immediate and urgent need of archival skills, but little or no opportunity to obtain formal or graduate-level archival education. An additional criterion for this institute was that applicants had to be working with Native American records or anticipate working with archival materials within one year. Applicants were not required to be Native American for admittance. The final enrollment list included twenty-seven participants from eleven states and Canada.

The program, which was held at the University of Redlands in Redlands, California, began with a reception, barbeque, and songs presented by members of a local tribe. In the tradition of many tribes, small packets of tobacco were presented by WAI as gifts, sage was burned, and prayers given by a member of the local tribe. Consistent with past WAI practice, the program was designed to foster a close-knit community among the participants and they were encouraged to stay in the campus housing set aside for WAI. Evenings featured informal gatherings and participants often traveled together to nearby attractions.

The formal instruction featured a combination of traditional lectures, hands-on practicum, and group discussion among the class as a whole or in small groups. There were two scheduled practicum sessions for arrangement and description and for preservation where participants had an opportunity for

hands-on experience. Other sessions incorporated exercises and case studies along with traditional lectures. The session “Administering Personal and Family Collections” included role-playing with participants acting as archivists and donors engaged in discussions concerning acquisition of records. All of the scenarios used in the role-playing exercise were case studies based on actual situations involving donations of records to an archives by tribal leaders or tribal members. The program also included field trips to local repositories with Native American collections.

The goal of the institute, to provide basic archival education to a group of Native American and tribal archivists, was more than met. An indirect goal of WAI always has been to provide networking capabilities to the participants, and this too, was achieved. The program also fulfilled an unanticipated need: not only did participants learn about working as an archivist, but the program provided them with valuable information and resources for working within Native culture and tradition to meet the needs of their particular archival collections.

Another byproduct of the program, which resulted from Ericson’s involvement, was that some of the participants in the institute became SAA members. There is a connection between the WAI program and the eventual creation of the Native American Archivists’ Roundtable within SAA as some of those individuals who later became active in the Native American Archivists’ Roundtable met as a result of their participation in the institute.

One of the most important outcomes of the WAI for Native American and Tribal Archivists was its success in providing archival education to an underserved community who might not have otherwise connected to the larger professional community. It was exciting to be part of this unique project. On all counts, it was deemed a success and it was obvious that many people would have expected that the project would be repeated. However, this project was very costly in terms of financial resources and the time necessary to organize the institute. The participants were not required to pay tuition or room and board. Their financial responsibility was their travel expense to get to the program.

Reflecting on the Western Archives Institute, and in particular the Institute for Native American and Tribal Archivists, has proven that basic education provided by institutes is something that should be part of the spectrum of archival education. Graduate education is the preferred method of educating archivists, but the reality is that there are individuals working to preserve historical records who will not seek, nor have the means or desire, to obtain graduate education.

As Frank B. Evans concluded almost thirty-five years ago, the profession needs to meet the archival training needs “of persons in smaller repositories and the middle and lower-grade professionals in our larger ones, and staff

members who do not now usually attend the academic-based archival courses.”³⁵ I would add that SAA and the profession as a whole also need to look to underserved communities in need of basic, grassroots archival education. There was discussion this week on the Archives Management Listserv about archives education. The point was well-made by Mark Greene that the profession has an obligation to provide archival education to those caring for records. Only then will we fully meet the need for archival education across the spectrum of people working to preserve our national historical record.

A Meeting Ground for Archivists and Librarians: Rare Book School and the Urgent Need for Community, Conversation, and Education

Michael F. Suarez, S.J.

What a pleasure it is to be here. You will recall, many years ago, that your mothers taught you that appearances are often deceiving and that labels often really do not tell you the truth. So is the case with me. I am a professor, and yet I have come here to make a public confession. Yes, it is true, for eleven years I was the keeper of the Gerard Manley Hopkins archives at Oxford University, which is to say that, like 50 percent of you, I am an accidental archivist.

Names can be deceiving as well. I have the privilege of being the director of Rare Book School at the University of Virginia in Charlottesville, but Rare Book School is about a lot more than books. Rare Book School is about the relationship between materialities and meanings. Rare Book School is, I believe, about the recovery of the human presence in all recorded texts. Rare Book School is about reading objects and collections in history and as history. If this is beginning to sound a lot like what the *raison d'être* of being an archivist is, then that is why I am here to talk to you. Because I believe we need to make common cause. I believe that the noble station of archivist is entirely consonant with the equally noble station of the special collections librarian. As someone who is coming, for the most part, from outside of these two communities (I have only been the director of Rare Book School for two years), I find it puzzling that, although people who are working in standards protocols do have conversations with each other, there is a kind of a partition between the archival community and the special collections community; and I find that partition mutually impoverishing. I find that lack of having a sense of a common mission diminishes both

³⁵ Frank B. Evans, “Post-appointment Archival Training: A Proposed Solution for a Basic Problem,” *American Archivist* 40 (January 1977): 57–74.

groups. I find the lack of effort to find a common language between those two groups is so far from being salutary for the future of the historical record that it is, in fact, an endangerment to it.

It is important that we learn from each other. More and more, special collections librarians are beginning to understand, and please be patient with them, that sometimes things are better described at the collection level rather than at the item level. *Mirabile dictu*, as they say. But sometimes it is true that members of the archival community are beginning to understand, too, that some of the power of item description can be useful for their own work.

Rare Book School this past summer, as it will next summer and the next and the next if the earthquakes do not swallow us up, offered twenty-five courses taught by some thirty-four faculty, with plenty of team teaching going on. Most of those courses had twelve students in them; they are seminar style courses. Almost all of those courses were, and this is a technical term, “stuff intensive,” meaning that Rare Book School holds some eighty thousand items that have been acquired expressly for teaching. In addition, Rare Book School could not operate without University of Virginia’s Special Collections, and our students spend a great deal of time there with hands-on instruction in Special Collections.

Here are some of the courses that seem to me relevant to this group. Jackie Dooley (OCLC Research) and Bill Landis (Yale University Library) teach a course called *Archives for Special Collections Librarians*. So, too, does Alice Schreyer (University of Chicago Libraries) teach the course *Special Collections Librarianship*. Many of those who have been enrolled in that class over the last twenty years have been archivists who have been seeking to learn about special collections librarianship because of overlaps in institutions. Dan Pitti (University of Virginia) has for many years been teaching *Encoded Archival Description* (EAD). I understand that there is now a pill you can take to cure that, so he has not taught EAD this past year and that may no longer be necessary. Helena Zinkham is teaching *Visual Materials Cataloging*; many of you will know her from the Library of Congress where she was the writer of the protocols. Another writer of the protocols is Deborah Leslie (Folger Shakespeare Library), who teaches *Rare Book Cataloging*. Andy Stauffer and Bethany Nowwiskie (both from the University of Virginia) teach a course called *Digitizing the Historical Records*, about what is lost and gained in that process. So, too, do Naomi Nelson (Duke University) and Matt Kirschenbaum (University of Maryland) teach a course on *Born-Digital Materials: Theory and Practice*.

Rare Book School is about a lot more than books. There are courses on paleography and manuscript studies. Jim Reilly of the Image Permanence Institute, along with his colleague Ryan Boatwright, teaches a course on the history and uses of photographs. John Bidwell (Morgan Library and Museum) and

Timothy Barrett (University of Iowa) teach a course on the history of paper and its use as a form of evidence. And one could go on, with courses on maps, courses on teaching, and courses, of course, on things like binding, the history of type, and the history of publishing, and so on.

These courses are five days, for thirty hours. Rare Book School has certainly always been and will continue to be about intellectual and professional excellence in the classroom. More than that, I think, Rare Book School is also about the creating of authentic community. Many of you will be familiar with a book in the social science field called simply Berger and Luckmann. That classic of social science, *The Social Construction of Reality*,³⁶ had as its premise that the ways we see the world are rooted in the conversations we have; simple enough, but groundbreaking at the time in 1967. The way we see the world, our understandings, is created by and instantiated in the people with whom we speak on a regular basis.

One of the great things about Rare Book School is that it is a place for the creation of community, a place for conversations. Among the three hundred students we had this year from seven different countries were conservators, librarians, archivists, collectors, antiquarian dealers, map dealers, museum professionals, and academics. The youngest person who came to Rare Book School this year was an undergraduate who was nineteen years old. The oldest was the past president of the Grolier Club, who is eighty-five years old.

As we work together and as we are in dialogue, we begin to understand history and processes. We begin to understand contexts and materials. In doing so, we learn how to recover the human presence in the archives broadly conceived. This seems to me a deeply noble thing, and if you will, the theme song for Rare Book School goes something like this:

What you have been given as heritage take now as task, for thus you will make it your own.

This is an excerpt, a little pericope, from a poem by Wolfgang von Goethe. Many of you probably recognize it. Goethe's words resonate powerfully for the communities that are engaged with recovering, preserving, and mediating to the public—alas, to a largely ahistorical public—the historical record and emphasizing its true importance.

How can we come together in authentic conversation to talk about operations and publics, about politics and values, about institutional navigation? How can we, and the people who come to Rare Book School—your special collections colleagues, the digitalists who are so important for access—how can we

³⁶ Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1967).

learn to bridge the intellectual gap, *nay* the gulf that exists between the item and the archive? If people are going to do scholarly work down the line, this seems to me absolutely essential.

How are we going to learn not only about best practices, but about more robust institutional understandings that have to do with acquisition and appraisal; with processing, discovery, and delivery; for these things are common to several professions? How are we going to learn from each other, even as we dedicate our lives in various ways, in various contexts, to the primacy of that which is primary? We are a people who make our lives, who dedicate our professional energies to where the evidences live. We are a people who hold a set of values that are essential to the long-term future of our historical past.

There are so many salutary initiatives, so many good things happening in the archival field. I am sure I should not say this, particularly since this is being recorded, but in many ways archival education is miles ahead of rare book education. It seems to me that the archival profession has grown since 1975 in leaps and bounds, and yet there is this mutual impoverishment. There are these silos. There are these partitions that diminish us. Particularly when we work in a world, a larger world, that thinks what we do is somehow arcane, that would consign what we do to the merely antiquarian or the quaint. But we know that it is none of these things. We know that it is essential for our present self-understanding. We know that if history is not alive for the people who want to come to the archive, then what we are custodians of is merely a dead letter and that will diminish our society.

There is lot at stake in what we do, and sometimes we forget the nobility of our station. Sometimes we forget the dignity of what we are entrusted with. At Rare Book School, and in other conversations that happen, we need to teach each other. We need to learn from each other so that our eyes are opened in new ways. We need to learn how to see more capaciously. We need to broaden our understandings. I think this is the business of Rare Book School; it is about dialog, it is about creating mutual understandings, and it is about understanding more and more who we really are.

Questions from the Audience

Question 1: To the individuals who spoke about institutes, and this relates to Plenary 2 and the Presidential Address which focused on digital education,³⁷ how do you see institutes responding to that call?

Brenda Banks: At the Georgia Archives Institute, we are always concerned with providing basic archival education. For the longest time, we resisted going beyond that. Now I think digital is considered part of basic, so now we actually bring in someone to teach a beginning course in archival technology and digitization. We have resisted that for a long time because we really did not see that as basic. But more and more it is very basic because we all live with it. We have embraced that and are building our curriculum to include it.

Nancy Zimmerman Lenoil: The Western Archives Institute has included it for a long time although it has gone through an evolution. Initially it was incorporated in the appropriate session. So, in other words, the arrangement and description wove in concepts of “how does this apply to digital records?” It is now a stand-alone session.

Question 2: How do we connect people at the national level with the educational opportunities that are available to them?

Brenda Banks: With the Georgia Archives Institute, we do draw people from all over the United States; it is not just people from Georgia and Atlanta or the Southeast. We do advertise nationally through all the professional publications, so we do that kind of outreach and we do get people who are in those self-selected positions often. I think we are covering that, and if there are suggestions as to how we could better do that, I would love to hear them.

Nancy Zimmerman Lenoil: I think it is a concern that there are people who do not have the ability to travel. The Modern Archives Institute and the Western Archives Institute are considered face-to-face education. Now, we have not looked at online education, and that is something that is a potential area for exploration. But the thing that we have seen with the Western Archives Institute, and I am speaking globally of the tribal archives program as well, is the benefit of having people come together for a two-week period. The learning that goes on when they are in the same room as each other is very valuable. There is a lot of learning that goes on outside the classroom just from that conversation. And

³⁷ See Helen R. Tibbo's Presidential Address, “On the Occasion of SAA's Diamond Jubilee: A Profession Coming of Age in the Digital Era,” *American Archivist* 75 (Spring/Summer 2012): 17–34.

I think that we do not publicize that well enough, as far as that being an additional benefit of the program besides the basic education. We are basically creating a support group. So while it would be wonderful to reach more people, we do have to recognize that it may not, especially in these times, always be possible. We have always “sweated” it in terms of “Will we have enough attendees to be viable?” I think that is something the profession needs to look at; how to make institute-level education more accessible.

Question 3: Please elaborate about education moving beyond rare book education.

Michael Suarez: I think that, unfortunately, the provenance of rare book education has been in the library schools and, because of the importance of information and particularly of IT systems, rare book education has really been squeezed out. Many library schools do not really offer courses in bibliography, in terms of the analysis of the physical object anymore. It seems to me that many academics who will be in PhD or master’s programs who will go on to become an important professional presence in the archives or rare book library will come from programs where bibliography and paleography are no longer required. In fact, if you look at the PhD programs in the United States in English and in history, then look at the top fifty programs in each, bibliography is required in none of them. That is a huge change from forty years ago. That is an enormous change! I took my terminal degree from a university that required both bibliography and paleography before you could even be a candidate for the doctorate. But that was in Europe and that is a lot different. I do think that this may seem visible to you that archives is the “sexy” part of the historical record now. And rare books is not. So it is attracting in many cases, better people, but I also think that doing special collections librarianship without a thorough-going knowledge of the physical objects that you are working with is a bit like being a physician and never having studied anatomy. It is a real problem. Archivists seem to me to be so self-aware about the problems that they are encountering and developing professional practices to deal with those problems, that the field just seems to have acquired a kind of robustness and an intellectual vigor that I am not really seeing in library schools right now. I think that is a problem. I would like both of them to be equally vigorous, but I have my fears.

Question 4: What about advocacy?

Michael Suarez: It seems to me that education, advocacy and outreach are the three legs of the stool on which we sit. I know we get obsessed with the education piece and that is important, but if you do not do the advocacy and the outreach, and we just heard two really beautiful papers about outreach to underserved communities, but if we do not do all three, the stool will fall over. It has to be a tripod of education, advocacy, and outreach and they have to be seen as inexplicitly linked and synergistic in some way.

Paul Conway: The little corner of the research articles under the rubric of archives and society is where the opening is for this kind of advocacy that is research based and not promotional in its own way. The problem is the ways in which archival scholars are approaching this issue of archives and society is not getting us where the profession needs to go in terms of the knowledge that is generated by this understanding. They are historical in nature, in many ways they are not forward looking, and they are not beyond navel gazing. What is the importance of my type of archives to some type of social practice in the past? So there are some real issues about how research can support the kind of advocacy that we are talking about here.

Brenda Banks: I think bringing up advocacy is a very important point. And as anyone in the audience who knows me, knows that I think one of the biggest failings of SAA is just that. We do not promote ourselves. Until we learn how to promote ourselves, how can we get others to support us? And that is what advocacy is about. I mean, how many times have we turned on a television or looked at a computer and noticed a big ad about the archives profession? Never. How often do you see libraries on television? All the time. So we have to learn how to promote ourselves and our profession before we can expect other people to be willing to support us.

About the panelists:

Brenda Banks is president and CEO of Banks Archives Consultants. Her recent projects include serving as chief archivist of the Morehouse College Martin Luther King Jr. Papers project and as project manager for SOLINET's Gulf Coast Academic Library Recovery Project. Banks planned and implemented the Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU) Archives and Preservation Education Project, which ran from 1999 to 2005. Banks is a Fellow and past president of the Society of American Archivists.

Paul Conway is associate professor at the University of Michigan School of Information. He conducts research and teaches courses on archival science; the digitization and preservation of photographs, books, and audiovisual resources; and the ethics of new technologies. Prior to joining the Michigan faculty, he was an archivist at the National Archives and Records Administration and a senior administrator for the libraries at both Yale and Duke University. He holds a PhD from the University of Michigan and is a Fellow of the Society of American Archivists.

Nancy Zimmelman Lenoil has been an archivist with the California State Archives since 1987. She was appointed state archivist in February of 2006, the first woman to be state archivist in California history. From 1991 until 2006, she was administrator of the Western Archives Institute, the only program of its kind in the Western United States to provide an introduction to basic archival theory and practice. She served as project director for the Western Archives Institute for Native American and Tribal Archivists. Lenoil is a Fellow of the Society of American Archivists.

Michael F. Suarez, S.J. is director of Rare Book School, a professor of English, university professor, and honorary curator of Special Collections at the University of Virginia. A Jesuit priest, he holds four master's degrees—two each in English and theology—and a doctor of philosophy in English from Oxford.