

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 McKemish 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/McKemish 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 McKemish, "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 articles 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 McKemmish’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 McKemmish, 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 McKemmish, 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