

December 9, 1985

## Archivists' Resource Allocators: The Next Step

### Introduction

The Task Force on Archives and Society analyzed the Levy report on archivists' resource allocators to draw conclusions about the following subjects:

1. Stereotypes. Do resource allocators' responses reveal a common stereotype of archivists and, if so, what are its characteristics and the implications for action?
2. Self assessment. Do the findings argue for a re-evaluation of how archivists look at themselves as professionals?
3. Advantages. What does the report suggest about archivists' "competitive advantage" in dealing with resource allocators?
4. Communications obstacles. Does the report identify avenues of communication with our resource allocators that we could pursue?
5. Outreach programs. Are there specific outreach programs that the report seems to support?
6. Professional development. Does the evidence suggest the need for specific kinds of training or education for archivists?
7. Progress. Does the data indicate how we might measure progress in improving resource allocators' perception of archivists?

### Stereotypes: The Archival Personality and the Impotence of Virtue

A stereotype of archivists and their work clearly emerges in the study of resource allocators. Archivists are viewed as quiet professionals, carrying out an admired but

practically frivolous activity. Resource allocators do not value archives in a pragmatic, daily sense. Personal characteristics attributed to archivists compound the problem.

Archival work is plagued by stereotypes, too. Resource allocators respect documents and collections, but they view them as objects rather than as sources of information. Although resource allocators think they know what archives are, they are wrong. Unfortunately, archivists have not disabused them of their misconceptions.

The depth of the problem becomes even clearer when some resource allocators suggest that promoting the use of archives is not very important. Underuse is even welcomed by these respondents since it does not claim resources. This attitude only reinforces the resource allocators' perspective that archival services must have value only to a small group of so-called serious users.

The status quo may actually satisfy both parties in a rather perverse way. Introverted archivists do not know how to fight for their needs, tending to accept what is handed to them. Resource allocators welcome the situation because it frees them to respond to "real" problems. There is evidence to support the proposition that archives' poor relationship with resource allocators actually suits the archival personality, although it does so at great cost to the archives.

#### Self-Assessment: Who Do We Want To Be?

In a fundamental way, the Levy study calls into question archivists' image of themselves. Archivists' professional identity is cloudy. Archivists need to determine whether or not it is really the technical aspect of their job (arrangement, preservation, description) that ought to come first. It seems clear that responding to clients' needs ought to be encouraged. Archivists can never forego their collections, but the profession must sanction attitudes that relate archival work to the expectations of others and assess archival value in terms of service. Meeting the needs of others doesn't mean one has to abandon traditional archival goals since they are not antagonistic.

The second attitude we need to change is the notion that archives serve only a privileged few "serious researchers." More people must know what we do. Resource allocators hear from others than only serious researchers and probably value the opinions of those people archivists tend to neglect. In Levy's words: "Making archives a more common and accessible concept, and doing more to open them to use and visiting, should diminish the various elements of dustiness and mustiness, sheer acquisitiveness, territoriality, and dead accumulation."

Archivists must realize, too, that professionalism and management are not mutually exclusive. To learn and practice sound management does not mean capitulating to the enemy. If archives are to receive the attention and the share of resources which are essential to their growth, if they are to acquire responsibility and visibility, then archives must constantly seek status and influence within the parent organization. Management techniques provide the tools to do that.

Archivists suffer from the belief that somehow they don't deserve more. To maintain this attitude is to give up the fight before it has begun. As the report notes: "Archivists need to translate their importance into more power. That requires more self-assertion, more concerted action, being less sympathetic to or understanding of the resource allocators' budget problems."

Archivists must acknowledge that they deal with information and information dispersal rather than with paper and the techniques of managing paper. The purposes, uses, and contributions of the archives must be made more vivid, more concrete, more useful. Archivists need to place themselves in the information mainstream, stressing the value of historical records to current decision making.

Archivists should look to successful role models to challenge their self-perceptions. The archivist must be seen as in charge of his or her own destiny. Archivists are respected as a general kind of professional person, but resource allocators prefer to treat them as ordinary job holders.

### Advantages: Sustaining the Competitive Edge

Archivists have strengths to build upon. We appear to resource allocators to convey truth, accuracy, objectivity, and discipline. We are virtuous and dedicated. If we learn to figure out what our audiences want and how an improvement in our status will get it for them, then our advantage is that we should be able to present the argument impeccably and with an appearance of correctness.

Archival research and thinking skills could be used to better advantage. Our training and interests stress the ability to analyze problems, develop hypotheses, draw conclusions, all of which makes us valuable as analysts in a variety of organizational settings. It is up to archivists, however, to identify tasks that could profitably employ these skills and seek them out.

Archivists enjoy an advantage, too, in that they probably understand the nature of the parent organization as well as anyone by virtue of their access to information. They know where the power is and ought to be able to get close to it.

Archivists have many assets but do not have an attitude that takes advantage of them. In a sense, the advantages granted to us by resource allocators may be our biggest disadvantages--we are well liked for our passivity; we are respected for our service, and service is by implication reward enough; we are admired for our curatorial ability, meaning we are quiet, pleasant, and powerless.

### Communications Obstacles: Informing Resource Allocators

The Levy report indicates that archivists don't communicate with resource allocators effectively. The crux of the problem may be that archivists don't conceive of resource allocators as a distinct, top-priority audience requiring special types of communication with tailored content.

Communications should involve more direct contact scheduled by the archivist acting as initiator. Archivists should see to it that resource allocators are involved in archival activities that benefit the institution so that the allocators understand the archival role better.

Archivists need to develop skills to deal with resource allocators in terms they will respond to. They must identify the appropriate people to reach and educate. Lobbyists have honed these abilities to a fine art. They involve documenting need and appropriateness of requests, eliciting the aid of allies, knowing how to sell, knowing how and when to communicate achievement.

Effective communication will require better product definition for archives. Curatorial services must be combined with educational, informational outreach services in the "archival product."

#### Outreach Programs: Building Support

Although resource allocators are of two minds regarding the wisdom of expanding archival use, the brunt of the evidence suggests that archivists would be well served by outreach activities. The Levy report, for example, suggests that "Open houses, showcases, special events, celebrations, announcements of findings and distinctive uses of archives, etc., will convey a greater sense of vitality."

The crucial point here is to involve resource allocators in planning these activities--find out what they want, who they want, and go after it. Specific types of programs are not the answer because successful ones will vary widely from institution to institution. It is more important to be cognizant of the need to target specific audiences.

Outreach activities ought to focus on current, applied use, not on scholarship as such. Resource allocators will probably value more highly such practical uses as saving time and money in advertising campaigns or resolving a contract issue. In other words, archivists can acquire clout by applying information they manage to daily activities that matter to others, e.g., resource allocators.

Finally, archivists must show concern for their image and use outreach programs to improve it. It is not a question of cultivating an image or not--all our actions contribute to some sort of image. Rather the challenge is to make the image accurate and useful. Great products which suffer poor images wither. Promotion requires sensitivity to image.

#### Professional Development: Changing Archival Behavior

Task Force analysis of the Levy report emphasizes the need for extensive professional development opportunities sponsored by the Society of American Archivists and regional archival organizations and developed with the help of others outside the profession. The development program should possess continuity and thematic unity; it cannot be a one-time proposition. This training will be aimed at changing basic archival behavior.

Current training and experience tends to corroborate resource-allocators' perceptions of archival skills as curatorial, emphasizing scholarship, historical background, technical tasks, attention to detail, ability to work in solitude, and the like. Without sacrificing these necessary components of archival experience, the profession must encourage the development of managing, decision-making, and representational skills among those who desire them.

Specific topics include the following: communications techniques; motivation training; managerial techniques; personnel management; nature and use of power; negotiation in the work place; and strategic planning for public programs; and personal representation. These activities should be reinforced through a public information program housed in the central office and through appropriate publications. Furthermore, these topics should be considered along with other professional issues such as certification, archival training, and the work of the Committee on Goals and Priorities.

## Progress

It will be difficult to measure progress in our relationships with resource allocators. One way might be to track increases in budgets, salaries, equipment, staff, or facilities, determining the archivist's role in these improvements. A follow-up to the Levy study in five or ten years is another method. Finally, there is value in constant reporting, constant monitoring of a few fixed points, such as salaries and job status.

Progress must be measured ultimately against objectives which are set forth in a written plan. The SAA should continue its work to develop long-range plans that address such topics as product definition, development of the "archival image," and professional training.

## Conclusion

The history of the women's movement in this country points up some instructive parallels with the current status of archives. Indeed, factors successfully employed by women may well benefit archivists as we seek to improve our relationship with resource allocators. For example, consciousness-raising, that is documenting the current situation, makes it clear that resource allocators hold an exploitative view of archives. Acknowledging this state of affairs is the first step to move beyond it. Employing the principle of equal pay for equal work should allow archivists to compare their activities favorably with others in the information field which are better funded, strengthening the case for archival support. Assertiveness will serve archivists well by challenging others, promoting mobility through archival ranks and beyond to management positions, and demonstrating archivists' versatility and range of contribution. Networking will make clear that patterns of exploitation exist, provide success models to encourage others, and reinforce changes in behavior that benefit the profession.

The Society of American Archivists must provide the leadership to improve the status and understanding of archives. Ten years of experience at the American Library Association illustrate the value of a vigorous initiative by

the central office and governing structure of the Society whether or not the membership at large has seen the light. In Elsie Freeman's cogent words, this is a case where authoritarianism, gently applied, is far more important than consensus. Change is at the root of improving our fortunes.



THE IMAGE OF ARCHIVISTS:  
RESOURCE ALLOCATORS' PERCEPTIONS

Prepared for  
SOCIETY OF AMERICAN ARCHIVISTS  
TASK FORCE ON ARCHIVES AND SOCIETY

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December 1984

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Study #722/01

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## INTRODUCTION

This report presents the findings of a qualitative study aimed at understanding how resource allocators perceive and characterize archivists.

The findings are based on interviews with 44 people who control and/or influence the funding of archival operations. These resource allocators received letters from the Society of American Archivists asking their cooperation in being interviewed for the study. Appointments were made with the respondents and they were interviewed to determine what they think of archivists, how they define them as professionals, and what they consider to be their primary roles and functions.

Interviews were conducted in five cities: Atlanta, Chicago, Kansas City, Los Angeles and New York. Respondents were affiliated with three kinds of institutions: Government, Educational (University and College), and Other (composed mainly of private business and industry, historical societies and museums, and social organizations).

The sample is further described in tables on the following pages.

## SAMPLE DESCRIPTION

N=44

<u>CITY</u>	<u>N</u>
Atlanta	8
Chicago	8
Kansas City	10
Los Angeles	7
New York	<u>11</u>
TOTAL	44

<u>TYPE OF ARCHIVES</u>	<u>N</u>
Educational	16
Government	12
Other	<u>16</u>
TOTAL	44

<u>SEX</u>	<u>N</u>
Men	28
Women	<u>16</u>
TOTAL	44

<u>NUMBER OF YEARS IN FIELD</u>	<u>N</u>
2 years or less	3
3 to 5 years	5
6 to 11 years	5
11 to 20 years	17
Over 20 years	<u>14</u>
TOTAL	44

<u>NUMBER OF YEARS WITH FIRM OR INSTITUTION</u>	<u>N</u>
2 years or less	6
3 to 5 years	11
6 to 10 years	8
11 to 20 years	13
Over 20 years	<u>6</u>
TOTAL	44

SAMPLE DESCRIPTION (continued)  
N=44

PROFESSION OR TITLE

(Each profession or title below was mentioned once,  
except where otherwise indicated)

Director (3)  
Executive Director (2)  
Assistant University Librarian (2)  
Associate University Librarian (2)  
  
Assistant Vice President  
Associate Director of Educational Programs  
Executive Officer  
Library Administrator  
Vice President, Employee and Public Relations  
Manager, Information Research Center  
Dean of School of Social and Behavioral Sciences  
Director of Information Resources  
President and Director  
County Clerk  
Librarian for Rare Books and Manuscripts  
Manager of Information Communication and Records  
Management  
Vice President  
Director of Administrative and Personnel Services  
Director of Research Libraries  
Vice President in Charge of Public Affairs  
Chairman, Archives and Research  
Coordinator of Library Services  
Assistant Regional Administrator for Resource  
Management  
Secretary General  
Dean of Library  
Curator  
Assistant Dean  
Assistant Director  
Secretary of State  
Director of Personnel  
Director of Libraries  
Vice President of Academic Affairs  
Associate Director of Library  
Business Manager  
Director of Finance  
President  
Vice President of Administration  
City Commissioner  
Head of Special Collections

## SUMMARY AND IMPLICATIONS

### I. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Interviews with 44 resource allocators are presented at some length in this report. Here the themes of the findings are outlined under two main headings, reporting allocators' attitudes toward the archives and their perceptions of archivists.

#### A. Attitudes Toward the Archives

1. Resource allocators value the archives. They claim to be knowledgeable about their contents, functions, and necessity.
2. They speak highly of their own archives, praising the operation and its maintenance.
3. They vary in degree of actual contact with the archives; but are especially proud to cite specific objects and exhibits that make the archives noteworthy and visible.
4. Initial visits to archives surprised the allocators who expected either gloomy, dusty rooms or just a library.
5. Service is described as high in quality, often a triumph over limitations in funding, with consequent shortages of space and staff.
6. Archives are seen as having grown in recent times, in interest, importance, size, and quality, and as likely to continue to do so.
7. Funding of the archives is regarded as part of a routine budgeting process.
8. Allocations to the archives are justified by such rationales as:
  - a. They have to compete for their portion of limited resources.
  - b. Their funds are inadequate, but all departments complain of (or suffer from) that.
  - c. Over time the archives get their fair share.

9. Basically, the archives have a low priority, for several reasons:

- a. The archives tend to be "out of sight, out of mind."
- b. The archives hark to the past, seem passive, stored, compared to more current, ongoing, aggressive demands on the budget.
- c. They lack political clout, compared to other departments.
- d. They are most vital to academic institutions which may be the poorest. They are legally required in government, but up against more powerful groups (e.g., police, fire).
- e. They are not a profit center in business organizations.

B. The Image of the Archivist

1. Archivists are respected as skilled people with strong motivation.

2. They come from diverse backgrounds. They are generally liberal arts people, often with training in history and library science, particularly; and other course work in the humanities.

3. Courses in archival work would be useful, certification seems less important. Allocators are content with archivists learning by doing.

4. Personal qualities, skills, talents stand out:

- a. Appreciation of history
- b. A detective-like curiosity
- c. Patience with details
- d. A strong sense of organization
- e. Ability to work in solitude and confinement
- f. Desire and ability to serve various people
- g. Skill with preservation and repair

5. Intrinsic work satisfaction is expected to be high.

- a. Important work, touched with immortality
- b. Intellectual challenge

- c. Joy of discovery
- d. Pride in publication
- e. Gratification in being of service

6. Resource allocators say archivists are just people, with varied personalities, BUT...

- a. They are scholarly
- b. They have cultural interests
- c. They are apt to be introverted, bookworms, quiet and mousey
- d. They are amazingly good at finding what one wants from the archives
- e. They may be territorial and possessive, ambivalent about sharing and serving.

7. Archivists' impact on organizational policy is thought to be moderate. Archivists are middle range professionals--not oriented to growth positions, management roles, or organizational power.

8. Their status is respected and judged by allocators to be satisfactory. It would be nice if they got more money and recognition, but resource allocators do not see archivists as being dealt with inappropriately.

Summarizing the situation, it may be said that it is one weighted with "niceness"--the archivists having the impotence of virtue, which is expected to be its own reward, leaving the allocators to address themselves to more pressing concerns.

## II. IMPLICATIONS FOR ACTION

The findings indicate that archivists are hampered in seeking resources by some pervasive issues that might be addressed by actions that build upon their many assets.

### A. Coping With Allocators' Attitudes

The allocators feel righteous about their role in maintaining the archivists' status quo.

1. Intellectually, resource allocators understand what archivists do, and praise them. But they are generally content with their place and rewards. If that is to change, this satisfaction needs jarring so that allocators re-perceive archivists as deserving of greater support. It won't be easy as they are well-defended by their attitude of being on the side



of the archivists and regretful at not being able to do more for them.

2. The archives' needs are seen as having a relatively low priority compared to other budgetary demands. To raise this sense of priority, archivists should bring more to the fore the essential character of the archives. Allocators know archives are necessary by law and for research. But the purposes, uses, and contributions of the archives have to be made more vivid---more explicit, more concrete, and repeated in varied ways.

Doing so requires the communication of a steady flow of examples to heighten awareness and appreciation of what is being gotten for the money.

3. Archivists need to translate their importance into more power. That requires more self-assertion, more concerted action, being less sympathetic to or understanding of the resource allocators' budget problems.

## B Perceptions of Archivists

Archivists are perceived as quiet professional, carrying out an admired but comparatively subterranean activity.

1. Archivists need to enhance their visibility in various ways. They have some good bases for making claims. Traditional interests in biography and history are strong foundations. The growing interests in genealogy, archeology, and nostalgia, in pluralism, in curatorial activities, in seeing exhibitions, special collections, etc., are all sources for greater assertion of the role and importance of archivists.

2. Archives and archivists have been coming more to the fore, but these words must gain a wider currency. Publicizing the accomplishments of archivists and what they do needs dedicated attention.

3. Greater clarity of definition is needed to distinguish archives from libraries, and to let people know what is different about archivists and archives. They sound grand but mysterious. There is perhaps more interest in objects, artifacts, than in "mere" records.

4. Archivists' professional identity is unclear. They are respected as a general kind of professional person; but resource allocators may prefer to treat them as more ordinary jobholders. They may resist more professionalism (training, certification, etc.) and prefer diversity and working one's way up as more easily controlled and less expensive.

A primer approach to explaining what an archivist is and does, how young people might think about it as a career, would be useful.

5. Traditional stereotypes that linger on even among more knowledgeable resource allocators need to be counteracted. Making archives a more common and accessible concept, and doing more to open them to use and visiting, should diminish the various elements of dustiness and mustiness, sheer acquisitiveness, territoriality, and dead accumulation. Open houses, showcases, special events, celebrations, announcements of findings and distinctive uses of archives, etc., will convey a greater sense of vitality.

In sum, archivists have an identity that is a compound of specific abilities and attractions, somewhat vaguely conceptualized in the minds of others and burdened by unexciting stereotypical elements. To improve their situation, archivists need to define more coherent identity objectives, and communicate greater freshness and distinctiveness in imagery by their training, programs, self-assertion, publicity, advertising, and relevance to modern life.

## I

THE NATURE AND USES  
OF ARCHIVES

This chapter deals with three main areas: how resource allocators generally perceive and evaluate archives, what they think of the archives in their own organizations, and their attitudes and practices regarding the funding of their archives.

A. GENERAL VIEWS OF ARCHIVES

The value of archives is acknowledged. All the resource allocators interviewed are fervent in saying that archives are extremely important and that they are beneficial to society as a whole as well as to its various segments. They regard archives as vital, in some cases the only source for locating material that gives a factual picture of past events. In their view, archives represent a key means of preserving history and heritage. Such preservation is important because one must know the past in order to understand and be better informed about the present. Understanding history makes it easier to plan for the future, particularly in the sense of not repeating past mistakes. A central value of archives is that they are a permanent collection, making it possible for future generations to learn and benefit from them.

"Society benefits from the restoration and preservation of historical material. The documents preserve our heritage, what we are as a people and as a country, and makes this information available and accessible to anyone who wants it for their own satisfaction or development. A better informed society can build on the past for a better future."

(Educational) \*

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\* Identifying information from these quotations has been deleted. Only the type of organization with which the respondent is affiliated has been indicated: (Government, Educational or Other (this latter type is composed primarily of social organizations, historical societies and private businesses)).

"Archives play a very key role in preserving our history and origins and helping us put our current times in a better perspective."

(Other)

"Archives preserve our historical heritage in some systematic form. It's important to have the facts available. As Mark Twain said, 'First get the facts. You can always distort them later.'"

(Educational)

"The study of history is beneficial to society. It keeps you from making the same mistake twice."

(Other)

"I saw an inscription on a library that said, 'An adult who doesn't know his past will always be a child.' Now I'll give you another saying: do you know why humans are the only animal that laughs? Because it's a coping mechanism for the only animal that knows he has to die. Archives will provide the continuity that extends beyond that death."

(Government)

Resource allocators feel well informed and are fluent about the contents of archives. At the broadest level, they describe these as historical records, documents and other materials that have social, cultural and/or fiscal relevance. They are thought to be relevant primarily to the parent organization, but also of use, interest and value to others who have the need or desire to study this information. In describing archival contents, resource allocators talk about these in general but tend to focus on the contents of their own repository. Thus, those affiliated with educational institutions point out that the records generally pertain to former students and faculty members, and include information on the founding, development and organization of the college or university. Those affiliated with government archives point out that their collections emphasize information on previous and current administrations

and on municipal policies, legislations and procedures. Those affiliated with private business say that their archives are mainly limited to contents directly linked to the company and its business and financial development. Those affiliated with social organizations and historical societies tend to describe a wider variety in the contents, although these, too, are considered pertinent to understanding the background and purpose of the organization.

"They need to maintain them to ensure they have the fiscal records that are needed. Primarily, you have to know where you have been. They have fiscal importance. They tell you who got their start here. For research purposes, for our institution and for people outside or who were once here. We keep anything pertaining to the history of our university."

(Educational)

"Archives are maintained to provide historic information. Depending on the nature of the organization or institution, that information may range from books, documents, manuscripts to archives such as ours which have a statutory purpose, that is, required by law. In regard to our municipal archives, there was early legislation which demanded the establishment of the archives. We provide a wide range of information, particularly regarding the historic administration, policies and laws of the city."

(Government)

"The archives contain product and marketing information, financial information, business development information like agency files, stock exchange information and subsidiary information, official books and records of the company, advertising materials and company memorabilia."

(Other)

"They contain deeds, wills, contracts, cancelled checks. It's primarily written pieces of paper, and in some cases pictures, some sculptures and books, certain clothing. We have some

Civil War weapons, small household artifacts. It's legal, historical, reference type of information."

(Other)

Regardless of their organizational affiliation, resource allocators describe the contents of the archives as being in a wide variety of forms. Printed paper seems to be the most common form of preserved material. However, there are also audio and visual records, photographs, and various artifacts and other physical objects. There appears to be an increasing use of microfilm, microfiche and a variety of micrographics. This is turned in order to better preserve information, as paper is susceptible to so many damaging elements. In addition, the micro techniques permit more material to be accumulated in a smaller area, since space considerations are an ongoing problem with most archives. Further, information is being transferred to computers, for better organization and retrieval as well as for space considerations.

"Records in every form imaginable. Handwritten, printed, photographs, documents, manuscripts, tapes. Many important records are now on microfilm because the quality of paper we have now is terrible. Paper from the 19th Century is in far better shape than something ten years old. The low rag content and environmental pollutants destroy the paper. Also, we must use micrographics because of space limitations."

(Government)

"Documentary source material covering nearly everything. Books, manuscripts, papers, documents, they come in nearly every possible form and shape -- handwritten, typewritten, micro forms. In our case, we also have audio and video materials."

(Educational)

"Letters, financial records, minutes, court records, account books, printed materials of all kinds, back issues of publications, photographs, playbills, household accounts, almost

anything, but mainly not objects, but written materials and things on film."

(Educational)

"Manuscripts, documents pertinent to the organization. In ours, we have artifacts as well, such as gifts. We have the duelling pistols of Aaron Burr. Any records that have lasting administrative, legal or historical value. It may be in many forms. Because of space, a lot of original information is on microfilm."

(Other)

Resource allocators are familiar with the nature of archives in other organizations. Respondents were asked to discuss the contents and purposes of archival materials in institutions and organizations other than their own. There is a consensus in their descriptions of the reasons for these archives, their contents, and the uses to which they are put.

Resources allocators not affiliated with educational institutions describe these archives as pertaining to the history of the school, its founding and its development, detailing how administrative and educational policies have evolved. The contents also include records on current and former students, faculty and other personnel, keeping track of their whereabouts, noting their achievements while at the institution, and also noting their later accomplishments. These archives are assumed to contain important collections donated by individuals and organizations. The main impression is that there is a heavy emphasis on printed matter -- books, rare books, manuscripts, theses and dissertations.

Most use of these archives is believed to be by faculty and students who are pursuing academic and historical research. In addition, the administrative staff uses the information to research the institution's history in order to prepare for future plans. The materials are also studied by outside scholars and historians who are tracking down data on a wide variety of specialized research areas.

In describing these archives, respondents give the impression that, compared to those in other organizations, academic archives are most often used for "pure" or "serious" research. They are less often used for looking up a single fact or for finding out about a specific issue. More likely, they are for scholars who want to become seriously immersed in these documents, looking for factual support and information to help them accomplish their research goals.

"They preserve the history of the college or university through newspaper clippings and other records. They keep alumni files, records of what they've done. They have collections given by individuals, like authors' collections. I'm sure they would use the figures on their growth for promotion in annual reports and in fund drives."

(Other)

"They have general collections on a variety of subjects and they have archives on the history of the institution itself. They're for somebody who's interested in the institution, how policies evolved over the years, or for people interested in specialized things, like history or English. People who are interested in a particular topic and how people responded in various situations, how crises were dealt with."

(Other)

"They would have historical information of the institution itself and people connected with it. Personnel records, student records, policy decisions and the history behind them. Books, rare books, manuscripts. It's to preserve a history of the institution. They maintain and keep records important to the institution's past. Used by faculty, students, administrators, historians."

(Government)



"Historical material about the founding and development of the institution. Collections donated by individuals or organizations who wanted them preserved. Material dealing with the systems used in education, changes and new developments. It would be used for historical research by scholars, writers and students."

(Other)

Government archives are thought to be very extensive in scope and very detailed and specific in content. Respondents believe that they contain a full range of municipal documents -- legislation and court decisions, activities and policies of current and past administrations, records describing the functions and accomplishments of public officials. In addition, many records are preserved on the residents of the area -- birth and death certificates, marriage records, tax records, contracts pertaining to personal, property and other financial matters.

Some resource allocators say that government archives are mandated by laws that identify which records are to be preserved. Several mention the National Archives in Washington as a prototype of archival records. There is a feeling among some resource allocators that government archives tend to preserve "everything," perhaps because their contents are specified by legislation.

The main users of government archives are thought to be the staffs of government agencies looking for information pertaining to their particular functions. Other users would be members of the legal profession studying precedents and other material related to current litigation. The general public might seek out these archives to trace a genealogy or to verify documents and contracts relating to their personal and business affairs. Other archives use government records for copies of documents to add to their own collections. The breadth of information in these archives also means that a variety of individuals and groups with special interests would seek these out for their own information and research purposes.

"They keep important historical documents and they keep them very well. The most important are displayed for the public to see. They keep records of agencies and laws that have been enacted, executive orders, important correspondence by the government, by every administration. They keep these records for themselves or for anyone who might like to write about it. They would be used by other government employees or other agencies who need to know what happened. Also scholars and the general public might be interested, too, but not as much as governmental agencies."

(Educational)

"In Washington they would collect every scrap of paper ever put out. They serve as a record of policy making and government actions. Used by government employees as a background for planning. Legal scholars and historians would use it."

(Educational)

"Copies of law, legislative acts, contracts, minutes of legislative sessions, tax records. To have a record of your laws and the background supporting that legislation. They are also required by law to maintain archives. They are used by the public in general. They would need records such as birth certificates, death certificates, wills, deeds, contracts, for many different reasons."

(Other)

"They have everything from the Declaration of Independence on down, all kinds of important documents, census records, marriage and military records. They supplement smaller archives. We can order copies from them. They're used by genealogists, people researching land titles, people who need proof of their ancestry."

(Other)

"They have all the records of all the agencies. The National Archives has all records relating to all aspects of the government. It's for

people wanting to study some aspect of the government and also for special groups who might have a ton of interests, like for students doing research."

(Other)

The main focus of the archives in a social organization appears to be the collection and retention of materials describing the organization's founding, purpose and development. Records are kept to document the organization's activities, its impact on the surrounding area and its involvement in social issues and movements pertinent to its purpose. Detailed information is kept on present and past membership. This information can be used to keep track of social trends as well as for fund-raising drives. In addition to printed matter, these archives are likely to include artifacts, memorabilia and other objects relevant to the organization's history and membership. It is believed that these archives are used mainly by the members of the organization -- for reference, public relations efforts and writing of papers and articles explaining the organization to the public. Except for researchers with a specific interest in the organization, it is not expected that the general public would make much use of these archives.

"Their archives would contain charters, constitutions, photographs, minutes of meetings, memorabilia, perhaps neighborhood history. The main uses would be historical research, such as research for current publications. The main users would be the members of the social organization, because they would have the main interest."

(Educational)

"Documents having to do with the history and development of the organization, information on the membership. The purpose is to study the evolution of the organization. To study social trends. You could reveal such things as when women or blacks first came into the organization, for example. Used by historians

and writers doing some kind of research. You could study social trends by looking at the membership rolls."

(Government)

"Their own files and history of the organization and the people connected with it. Donated materials, minutes of meetings, policies and procedures. Used by people within the organization for reference material of their own and for documentation of certain actions of the group. Also used by social historians, students of social history, those with a particular interest in the organization itself."

(Educational)

"They would have only information that relates to their society or group, like fraternal or ethnic organizations. It would be for internal use only. Probably would not be used by any outside group, just users who are related to the organization."

(Other)

Archives in private business are kept to provide a sense of continuity of the firm's management and growth. The contents focus on the actual operation of the company -- major policy decisions, financial and fiscal records, contracts and other legal documents, minutes of meetings, examples of advertising, promotion and public relations materials. These are preserved to understand why certain decisions were made in the past, using these to aid in future planning. It is believed that the archives are used mainly by employees of the company to help them in their job-related duties and functions. The legal department would use them as background material for drawing up contracts, dealing with lawsuits, finding precedents and other litigation matters. They would be used for researching past advertising efforts, for communications to employees and stockholders, and for supplying information to the public about the company. Because these archives are so narrowly and specifically focused on the company's business activities, it is felt that they would only rarely be used by outsiders. Some resource allocators point out that business archives are not generally open to the general public.

"Records management is the main thing. Records of decisions, policy, people hired. Documents of all that has happened in that business. The use would be to support administration and management of their business. The users would be people within the organization. They are most in need of the information to find the source of what has happened in the business."

(Educational)

"Records required by law. Corporate material, policy decisions, financial and fiscal material, minutes of meetings, things important to stockholders. It would be for legal purposes as well as providing documents of the business since incorporation. Mainly for internal use, but also lawyers, maybe journalists."

(Government)

"Financial records, minutes, publications. To give a sense of identity to the company. They could study them to learn from the past and avoid future mistakes. Employees would use them the most as they have the most interest in the company. One use may be to look at old ads to show them how to prepare new advertising."

(Government)

"They would contain legal records, records with information about the setting up of the business, minutes of meetings, materials written by and about that company. The main uses would be to supply information for annual reports and for PR departments to give to the media. The people who would use them are employees of the company, their lawyers, perhaps the advertising people. These are the people with a vested interest."

(Educational)

B. RESOURCE ALLOCATORS' PERCEPTIONS  
OF THEIR OWN ARCHIVES

Resource allocators seem well informed about the contents of their archives. They speak knowledgeably about the materials and records that have been collected, and they describe these as being in a wide variety of forms. They are also able to point out specific items that they consider especially important and historically meaningful. They speak with pride about certain unique items in the collection, pleased that their organization has these outstanding materials.

Resource allocators repeatedly describe their own archival collections as invaluable. They are unable to place a monetary value on them, but they describe them as priceless. They know they contain original and one-of-a-kind materials that are irreplaceable. In addition to their pride and pleasure in being connected to these archives, they are vocal about the need to maintain and preserve them.

"We tend to collect documents and records of our own institution, social welfare and settlement house projects. We have many records of the City of Chicago. The importance of these records goes without saying. This is history, one-of-a-kind sort of history. The information contained in these records is not only important but very valuable. As far as our own records go, there would be no way to replace them. They are used a great deal by our students and faculty. We have a photograph of Jane Addams that CBS-TV used on one of their TV specials. We also have a collection of letters written by Emma Goldman. How do you put a value on this kind of information?"

(Educational)

"Some are kept for legal purposes, others to keep a running record of the company's activities. Our typical archival records include company papers and corporate instruments,

patents, research and development materials, information from the comptroller and legal departments, personnel materials, materials published from our communications department, shareholder information, general ledgers, financial statements. It's all extremely valuable. The materials are vital to the ongoing business of the company, not only from a legal standpoint, but historical as well. They are more valuable to us internally than to anyone else."

(Other)

"We have rare documents, like the original charter for the State of Georgia. Histories, journals, former governors' papers. Day-to-day papers of state agencies. There is a whole tract in tax returns. It aids in legal official documentation of actions taken in the past by state governments. It provides insight into how historical personalities evaluated issues in their time. The records are priceless. Many could not be replaced. For example, papers of the original founding of Georgia. It provides great insight into key parts of our history. If they were destroyed, it would wipe out decades of Georgia history."

(Government)

"County records, militia records. We have records from the time of the Indian Wars in the early 1820's. We have scrapbooks and personal papers of local prominent residents. Minutes of various county agencies. Recently, the county health department came to us for help in writing their history. I can't imagine life without these records. It would be like starting life on a desert island. It is priceless. I worry so much about a fire that would wipe it out. If these records were lost, people would have to piece together the best they could."

(Other)

They note the many kinds of people who use the archives. Resource allocators in private businesses confirm that their archives are used mainly by company employees. Those in other organizations and institutions describe their archives as providing necessary and valuable services, not only for internal users but also for a range of users from outside.

"The university archives will be used to write a history of the university. A major use is for students and their studies. We have outside visitors, some from foreign countries. They come to study our labor collection in particular. Students interested in commercial music use music to study music. Radio stations need access to our pop music collection for information on music of past eras."

(Educational)

"We use them to answer queries we receive. We get many questions, like where a certain drugstore might have been located years ago. Local universities send their students here to do in-depth research on an assignment, such as researching the building of a community. Students use them to study voting patterns down through the years. Almost every time someone is doing a genealogy they use our census records, maps, title search records and marriage records."

(Other)

"In our institution, the archivists themselves use them the most. They are also used by scholars, politicians, choreographers, black activists, the general public and students. Our archives are very useful for all the historical and factual information they contain."

(Government)

"They are used for research into product liability lawsuits. We use them for customer service research. We have many customers who use our products up to 30 years, and often the only source of information with



reference to their products is in the archives. We use them in some employee programs. Our marketing people and the law department use them the most."

(Other)

There is a wide variation in the contact that resource allocators have with their archives. In this sample, only one resource allocator says that he has not visited his institution's archives, although he claims to maintain contact with the archivist.

For the remainder, visits to the archive range from daily to a couple of times a year. Resource allocators consider the archives their responsibility, so they feel obliged to visit periodically to check on the operation and maintenance, to meet and confer with the staff regarding policies and problems. Those who go infrequently indicate vague supervisory reasons. Most in this sample say they are frequent visitors, not merely to oversee but also for research and information purposes.

"I go there because the people and operation are my responsibility. I usually go there about ten times a week."

(Educational)

"I manage them, so I must be familiar with the archives. I need to understand how they are used. I have used them often just for information purposes for learning about the archives and how to improve them."

(Educational)

"I have used it many times to get information about the university as I needed it for my job or to answer students or questions from the outside."

(Educational)

"In the four years I've been here, I've been there about six times. I just went there to get some research materials on some projects."

(Other)

"I'm there every day, to some extent for supervision, although our archivist works mostly independently. Mainly I go there to get some information to answer some question that the public has asked me about."

(Government)

Initial visits to the archives were generally a pleasant surprise. Some resource allocators expected to find gloomy rooms stacked with dusty boxes. They were surprised when they found attractive and efficiently maintained operations. Others expected the setup to be similar to a library, with many books on shelves. They were surprised to find the archives different in content and operation, with many materials and records besides books.

Some resource allocators -- especially those affiliated with government institutions -- were astounded by the size of the archives and the breadth of the materials contained therein. In other cases, respondents report that the archives were smaller when they first visited, but they seem pleased to say that the space and the collections have grown since then.

A common reaction with this group is to be positively impressed with the efficiency of the recordkeeping and the relative ease with which the materials can be located and retrieved.

"My first impression was that archives are organized in a very different way than library materials. I guess I thought of dusty boxes in a tight area. I suppose what surprised me most was the number of nonprinted matter housed in the archives."

(Educational)

"I've been there about 25 times. I was overwhelmed with the volume of material that the city collects. I expected it to be like a library, with lots of books, but this has volumes and volumes of records."

(Government)

"I thought it was an awesome collection of state history. They assist the public in finding information and records. I didn't think it would be as massive an operation as it is. The thoroughness with which the records are kept is amazing."

(Government)

"The first time I saw it, it was a smaller one than what we have now. I remember the smallness of the drawers and filing cases. It's bigger now and very well maintained. The quality of service is excellent."

(Other)

"I was impressed by the quantity and quality of the material and the organized way it was stored, and it has improved since then. I expected just boxes of dusty papers. There were boxes of papers, but they were very well organized. They had a catalog of topics and materials that was very clear and easy to use. They also had summary sheets of each collection which tell you what's in those collections."

(Educational)

The quality of service at these archives is consistently praised. Resource allocators say that the people who staff the archives are very knowledgeable and very well qualified. They are described as quick to find the requested material and as being very helpful to those making these requests. Resource allocators seem impressed with the high level of service, especially if the archives are understaffed and underfunded and the staff has to work in sometimes crowded and cramped conditions.

"I first went there because I needed material on some membership and fund-raising activities. I was so excited and thrilled at the history there that I wanted to stay all day. The service was wonderful. We have a wonderful archivist who is doing a marvelous job. There's much more information there than I had anticipated."

(Other)

"My first impression was that it was in a remote part of the library, yet the material was well organized and well maintained. There were various people to help me and they did. The service was just great, very helpful."

(Educational)

"The service there is fine. The staff is very competent, very on top of the materials. More space is needed for them here. The facilities need improvement. It's cramped, overworked and understaffed."

(Educational)

"The quality of service is exceptional. Their facilities are marginal, however. The people working there are outstanding. The one in charge is a leader in the field and trains his staff very ably, and the result is very good service. I can take a question or problem in there and they come up with something. They know how to get the information I need."

(Educational)

Resource allocators think highly of their archival collections. They claim that their archives are as good as or better than those in comparable institutions. They praise the completeness of the collections and the value of the materials. Some in educational institutions say that their archives are smaller and, in some cases, newer than those in the larger universities, but they nonetheless praise the contents and have hopes for continued growth. Some in government institutions proudly proclaim their archives to be bigger and better than others. Some in private business like to point out that they are unique in their industry by having archives.

"The quality is superb. We have several Nobel Prize collections. For the size of the institution, the size is good, but compared to other, larger institutions, it's small."

(Educational)

"In many academic institutions the archives have a longer history of existence. Ours is extremely well taken care of, but also newer. We're probably smaller than others. We're narrower in focus. Our archives are relatively new compared with many that are years and years old."

(Educational)

"We have a complete set of records that go back to 1827. San Francisco has nothing prior to 1906 because of the earthquake that damaged all previous records. Many other cities, like Baltimore, have poor records."

(Government)

"We have the best municipal archives in the country and are moving forward with the encouragement of the administration. Model legislation should be enacted to help cities develop their archives. We receive many requests from other cities for assistance in developing their archives. We kind of act as a model."

(Government)

"We are way ahead of the game as far as hospitals are concerned. There are few archives in hospitals. We are much bigger than anyone else in this area, as far as I know. I think we have something to be proud of."

(Other)

In all their assessments of their own archives, resource allocators consistently praise the operations, the way they are maintained and the wide-ranging services they provide. There are some complaints that lack of proper funding has resulted in limited space and in staff shortages. However, respondents claim that their archives measure up in spite of these limitations. In addition, many are optimistic in their view that their archives will grow in size and quality.

### C. FUNDING OF ARCHIVES

Archives are seen to have typical budget sources. Archives do not appear to have sources that are unique to them, but rather rely on the same resources used by other departments of the parent organizations.

Resource allocators affiliated with educational institutions say that the main sources of funding for their archives are the annual budget, the library budget, State appropriations, Department of Education grants, endowments and gifts.

Those affiliated with government institutions most often cite the following funding sources: funds or grants from the city, county, state or Federal budgets, congressional appropriations, real estate taxes, other tax levies, funds from the Parks and Recreation Department, fund-raisers and private donations.

Resource allocators in private business say that their funds come from corporate funds and the general operating budget.

Those affiliated with social organizations, historical societies and museums cite one or more of the following funding sources: general budget, grants or funds from county or Federal agencies, investment income, membership dues, income from museum sales, fund-raisers, endowments and private donations.

Funds for archival operations compete for a share in annual budget allocations. Resource allocators say that typically they receive a budget request from the archivist detailing financial needs for the coming fiscal year. This request is passed along to be included in the total operating budget for the organization. As the budget is reviewed, priorities are shifted among the departments and financial allocations can be raised or lowered. The final budget, then, is determined by the amount of operating funds and the perceived needs of the various departments to be funded. Archives must compete with other departments for the available monies.

Because archives are respected, resource allocators say that they try to honor the requests from their archivists, but they also defend themselves by saying that the final decision is often out of their hands. They cite instances when they have tried to increase funding for the archives, only to have to retract this because another department was found to have a greater or more immediate need. Resource allocators with government institutions assert that their archives cannot be given the same priority in the budget as such essential services as police and fire protection, and others are candid in saying that archives have a relatively low priority.

"Annually, in the budget-making process, we balance all of the institution's needs. I have to consider the relative importance of other institution activities, including exhibition, public profile, building needs, and the requirements of other departments."

(Other)

"It's a competition and, like any competition, it depends on the circumstances. No special advantages or disadvantages are given. If the archives' needs were more urgent, they would get a priority if other departments were less urgent."

(Educational)

"The archives have a high priority for my office, but this becomes somehow less important as it passes through the state budgetary process, and then tends to erode in the last stage when final budgetary decisions are made. This is true for other requests, not just for the archives."

(Government)

"We are engaged in long-term planning with the archives. We put in for what we need and as the occasion arises. I had to use \$35,000 for new benches for jurors, money I had wanted to use for the archives, so I have to consider all needs in making decisions on the financial resources available to us."

(Government)

"Archives is going to be relatively low on priority. We compete with all the agencies in Los Angeles for the limited funds of the city. Protection of people and property is the number-one priority of the city."

(Government)

In the opinion of resource allocators, archives generally receive their fair share of financial resources. They maintain that their organizations, in preparing budget allocations, try to deal equitably with the requests of all departments and attempt to find a balance between what is requested and the funds available. They maintain that all departments in the organization are disappointed at one time or another because their financial requests could not be met. Regarding archives especially, resource allocators say that requests from this department receive appropriate and due consideration when the final budget decisions are made. This is an area in which they tend to become cautious. Unlike their earlier enthusiastic rhetoric in praising archives, they now use terms such as "fairly," "balance," "reasonable," etc.

"We meet with the university several times a year to go over budgetary requests. If we have needs for further funds because of some project we're engaged in, we ask for it. Doesn't mean we always get it, but we are treated very fairly."

(Educational)

"I give no special priority to any of the departments. Instead, we try to maintain a balance. Archives are simply one part of our institution and enjoy no exceptional status."

(Other)

"As an educational institution, we have to have a library. Therefore, we have a reasonable percent of the operating budget for the archives. In this institution, there is nothing that would increase the priority. The archives has a high priority as it is."

(Educational)



"There isn't any decision making to be done in this area. The budget is just there each year and it's quite generous. We take into consideration the personnel, supplies and space."

(Government)

Archives in private business tend to have a lower priority. Resource allocators in this area are candid in stating that budget-making personnel are more apt to provide financial resources to those departments that are regarded as essential to the company's operation or that are contributing to the company's profit picture. Archives are not seen as revenue-producing, so they are not generally uppermost in these considerations. Although these resource allocators affirm that their archives are important and valuable, they also believe that this budget allocation hierarchy is appropriate in business and industry.

"It has a lower priority. It's not seen as an essential business function. I think the situation is as it should be."

(Other)

"In staffing, the priority is the same as other departments, and for the collection it gets less because it is not revenue-producing. It might have a higher priority only if more funds became available."

(Other)

"It's a fairly low priority. They are not a direct revenue department and that's why they don't have a high priority. I think that's proper. It might get higher when it is shown that they have more impact on the company."

(Other)

Archives can receive higher funding priorities under certain circumstances. Because resource allocators like to believe that the final budget tries to deal fairly with all departments, they claim that there are times when the archives could be given special consideration. They

give such examples as the archives receiving a large and important collection that would require additional funding to store and maintain, the archives having responsibility for an exhibit or special commemorative display that would need extra funds, or the unwelcome possibility that the archives might be damaged or destroyed.

"I'd say it's equal priority. Each part of our institution is considered part of the whole. But if some particular need arises in the archives we can make a trade-off within the budget. This might happen one year, but then the archives might have to hold off next year to give someone else an opportunity. This might happen if we received a really large acquisition and we needed a great deal more space. That, of course, would change the priority."

(Educational)

"The library here has a very high priority and the archives rides the coattails, so to speak, of the library system. The whole system, including the archives, is considered when budgetary decisions are made. If there were a special project involving the archives, like an anniversary celebration, that would receive higher priority."

(Educational)

"Equal priorities are given to the ten programs we have here. All ten are important, so all ten are treated equally. If we had a fire in the archives or a flood, then maybe they would get a higher priority."

(Government)

By and large, resource allocators seem to be very proud of the archives in their organizations. They are generally familiar with the contents of the collections and with their value and importance. They sometimes seem regretful that the archives cannot be enlarged and improved because of underfunding. They seem sensitive about this issue, as the interview

may imply a challenge to their responsibility, and they often insist that it is not their decision alone to provide more financial resources. They point out that, although they might wish it were different, the archives, like all other parts of the firm or institution, must abide by the budgetary allocations determined by the bureaucratic organization.

## II

## THE IMAGE OF ARCHIVISTS

This chapter discusses how resource allocators perceive archivists as professionals and co-workers and as people, and how they view the archivists' role and status in the organizational hierarchy.

Archivists are highly respected as skilled professionals. Resource allocators have much regard for archivists, describing them as well educated and well trained, and as having full command of the contents and operation of their collections. They realize that researchers and scholars can learn to use the archives to find the information they are after, but it is generally the archivist who explains the archives to them and instructs them in how to find what they want. Resource allocators are impressed with how thoroughly the archivists know what is contained in the repository and how easily and quickly they can find requested materials. Several point out that people may visit the archives without being exactly sure what they are after, and the archivist, with sensitive and judicial questioning, is able to guide and advise these visitors, helping them to better focus their research and informational objectives.

There are no consistent standards for evaluating an archivist's educational or employment background. Resource allocators say that their archivists usually have academic training -- generally an advanced degree -- in history. They consider this important and necessary training because they want their archivists to take a historian's approach to the organization and its archives. At a secondary level, archivists are described as having taken courses or degrees in library science, an experience that helps them in organizing and cataloguing their collections. Resource allocators feel that other desirable course work might include English, literature and foreign languages.

A few resource allocators say that their archivists have taken courses or degrees in archival work. There is a belief that more universities are offering specific courses and training in archival management.

As far as work experience is concerned, archivists are described as having eclectic backgrounds. Some came to the institutions having previously worked in other archival settings. Some worked in a library setting or as historians. Recent college graduates with relevant degrees and little or no work experience have become successful archivists. Others come to this position from various educational or scientific disciplines.

Overall, resource allocators do not have fixed criteria for evaluating an archivist's background. They have ideas on what educational and work experiences are desirable, but they like to be flexible in judging the individual. Over and above specific course work and job experience is the individual's total outlook and attitude toward the position and duties of the archivist. More than being a routine cataloguer, the archivist should demonstrate a strong sense of discipline for organizing and operating a diverse collection. The archivist should also have a historical outlook that indicates an appreciation of the materials and their value to the organization. Overall, resource allocators look for archivists with a broad educational background who can demonstrate in-depth knowledge of many subject areas.

A few resource allocators feel that it might be worthwhile if educational institutions did develop more specific course work and degree programs oriented to training future archivists. One respondent suggests that guidelines for such training might be set up by the Society of American Archivists. Even with such standards and guidelines, however, it seems evident that resource allocators would still want to exercise their own judgment as to the kind of person that would be best suited to their specific firms or institutions.

"There are two different areas of expertise I've found in archive people. First, a history background. Second, organizational skills and library science, either librarians or brand-new college graduates with no previous experience but with a degree in history. I wouldn't like to see these standards changed, but I would like to see something like the Society that is sponsoring this survey define an appropriate program for archivists."

(Educational)

"Library science degree or a graduate degree in history or just plain experience. I have no idea what their prior work experience would be. At the moment there are no standards or requirements that are adhered to by everyone."

(Educational)

"A graduate degree in history or an archival degree. We are more interested in the history degree. They must have a historical viewpoint more than just being a cataloguer type. It would be good to have them have archival training, but a graduate in history who had done work in archives would be best. We have our own standards and we follow them, but we like to have some flexibility."

(Government)

"Generally, the background includes either library science, English or American literature. They should have courses in archival work and, for our purposes, an advanced degree, a master's, at least. I would prefer fluency in at least two languages. Our standards are pretty well established."

(Educational)

"They usually have a master's in library science with special courses in archival work. Some are historians. I wouldn't like to see these requirements changed. The requirements are not the problem. I think I'm seeing fewer people who have a kind of depth in specific areas. I'm seeing more people with a wide

knowledge spread thin instead of an in-depth knowledge, especially in history. It's the nature of our society today."

(Government)

"Generally, they have a Ph.D. in history or close to a Ph.D. I assume they have worked in the field previously. I'm not aware of any specific standards, but the requirements would be some experience in the field, either as an archivist or as a curator."

(Other)

"I think archivists get into their work serendipitously. As far as their training goes, I think they usually have been affiliated with a library science program or perhaps a history major. We have two archivists who worked in astronomy and library work before they realized how interested they were in archives. It is a discipline-oriented thing, so they probably had work experience requiring discipline on their part."

(Other)

Certification of archivists might be worthwhile, but it would not be a major consideration. Resource allocators see some merit in setting up consistent standards of education and background that would lead to certification. In their reasoning, this would mean that the archivist at least met the basic and initial criteria. However, they see this as only the beginning. They feel that certification alone would not guarantee that the archivist is fully qualified. They are skeptical that certification would qualify the person for work in the wide variety of archives available. They would still want to go beyond certification to evaluate the individual according to their own criteria and according to the specific needs of their own archives.

"I'd need to know what the certification process is and whether it serves our purpose. It might qualify the archivist to do a better job, but there are other qualities that we are looking for."

(Educational)

"It wouldn't matter to me. I'm looking for talent. Just because one is certified doesn't necessarily mean they're exceptionally good at it."

(Government)

"Certification might work in some areas, like government archives, but not relevant in the academic setting. We must have those with strong academic background. We have requirements to meet our own standards, so certification is not really necessary. I prefer to hire on background and potential, not on certification."

(Educational)

"Merely having training in archival procedures for certification is only a part of what you expect. I look for other things, like human qualities, being able to work with other people, and a concern for detail and good work attitude."

(Government)

The successful archivist demonstrates a wide variety of skills and talents. According to resource allocators, the best archivists have superior intelligence and a solid educational background. A central characteristic is their love of and appreciation for history, to have a keen understanding of and respect for the past and to see the need for preserving it. They should be naturally curious, eager to engage in detective-like searches, and knowledgeable about research. They are likely to possess good management and administrative skills. A strong sense of organization is desirable, along with patience and attention to detail. They should enjoy working in solitude but also possess good interpersonal skills to deal effectively with different kinds of people. At the technical level, archivists need to be familiar with communication technology in order to handle information storage and retrieval. They must also be skilled in techniques for repairing and preserving valuable and perishable documents.

"Attention to detail, interest in and respect for historical records and facts, and a great deal of patience to be cooped up for long periods



of time. They need to work well with other people and they must have a strong sense of integrity. You could trust the archives to such a person."

(Government)

"They have to like tedious tasks. They should be organized, patient, have a lot of stamina and possess good management skills. They should have a flair for history and research and be able to deal with the public."

(Educational)

"A tremendous curiosity, a real bent for research and putting puzzles together. To understand history, to be a humanist, and to have a knowledge of library science."

(Government)

"A thorough understanding of history and an appreciation for it. An understanding of modern technology that allows massive amounts of information to be stored and retrieved in an organized way."

(Government)

"A keen interest in preserving history. They are concerned about the history of any subject. An ability to deal well with people. Administrative and organizational skills. A vision of how important these materials are going to be. Generally, their intelligence is superior and they must be broadly educated."

(Educational)

"Knowledge of the kinds of information that are significant to the organization. To know how to organize that information in such a way that it's useful. Be familiar with the means of preserving damaged or perishable material."

(Other)

The archivist's duties and functions are generally well known. Resource allocators may not know all the specific tasks that an archivist performs, but they seem to have definite ideas of the main responsibilities. They

say that archivists sort out documents and records that are worth keeping. They organize the material in logical and meaningful ways. They catalog and index it so it can be located quickly and efficiently. They familiarize themselves with the contents in their repository. A major function is being willing and able to help people who come to use the archives.

"The archivist orchestrates the recordkeeping of the institution. She collects, evaluates and arranges the material for inclusion in the archives and then assists the researcher who wants to use the material."

(Other)

"The archivist decides what to keep and what not to keep in an archives. That's very important. Another of their main duties is to be able to fill the needs of those they serve. They must know where to find the information they are asked for. Sometimes people don't even know what they want, so the archivist must know what to do in that case, too."

(Educational)

"They organize, catalog, deal with the public, identify conservation-type problems like mildew, and do restoration. They become familiar with the collection."

(Government)

"Archivists are like archaeologists. They dig, discriminate, preserve, and put what they find in order."

(Educational)

Resource allocators affiliated with educational institutions say that, in addition to the above functions, one important duty of the archivist is to locate people or groups who have important collections of information and persuade them to donate these to the institution. This is one instance in which effective interpersonal skills are valuable.

"Their major function is to make contacts and seek out people who have collections and urge them to donate it to the archives instead of filing them away or throwing away valuable information. They process the materials to make them accessible. They catalog and make records available. They also work with researchers who come in, making sure that they get the information they need."

(Educational)

"Our archivists do a number of things. They have a procedure and a plan of contacting people about the possibility of contributing their archives to us. This is an important part of their work. When they do get records, they take care of them, then go through them carefully and in that process they catalog the information and then it gets stored in a safe and secure place. We must get between 25 and 30 acquisitions a year, and this takes a great deal of time and energy."

(Educational)

Resource allocators are less certain about how archivists decide what to keep and what to discard. They assume that their training and background has provided them with certain archival guidelines for knowing what should be preserved. They feel that archivists have the expertise to use good judgment in evaluating materials, discarding duplicates, knowing which records are crucial and/or beneficial for preserving the history of their firms or institutions. Archivists are expected to be in communication with other staff members to discuss what information should be preserved.

"I don't know much about that. As a rule, I strictly go on their advice. Keeping some financial records is determined by law."

(Government)

"Redundant records can be disposed of. Also, there is an archival standard of appraisal for materials to be included in archives. They must exercise good judgment. Good communication

with the staff is important and continuing policy review is also important."

(Government)

"I don't know much about that. I'm sure they strive for as little duplication as possible."

(Other)

"I know very little about that. I know that original materials are more important. I know that budget summaries are important, but keeping every page of every budget for years on end is not necessary."

(Educational)

"I don't know the specifics. They use archivist guidelines and they use their own judgment and knowledge."

(Other)

Some resource allocators say that the decision on what materials to keep is determined by organizational policy. The policy specifies those records and documents that are to be retained, and the archivist follows the guidelines, perhaps deviating occasionally when a record does not exactly fit the requirements but is nonetheless deemed valuable and worth preserving. Some government organizations are required by law to keep certain records, so in this case, also, the archivist does not have to make the decision but follows the legislative dictum.

"Our institution has a policy. If it meets the policy requirements, it is retained. If not, it is not retained unless there is something particularly interesting about it."

(Educational)

"Archivists come after the fact. In other words, the record itself determines the inclusion, not the archivist. If the record is important, it will be kept. The record should be earmarked for retention from the time it is created."

(Other)

"In our case, we're bound by law. We know what we can't discard. In 1941, when microfilm was in its infancy, a law was enacted in New York which said that records could be destroyed only if they were microfilmed first. We were way ahead of the game there, in ensuring that our county history was preserved for the future."

(Government)

Archivists are strongly service oriented. Resource allocators readily list a variety of services that archivists perform for people who use the archives. A major reason for preserving the materials is to make the information available to those who want to study it, and archivists seem to be especially helpful and forthcoming in this regard. They handle requests not only in person but also by telephone and correspondence. They find records themselves as well as teach people how to locate the information. They assist students, scholars and historians with their research efforts. They provide information to reporters and authors and help the general public trace family history or locate personal documents. Some archivists conduct their own research from archival material and publish their findings. In addition to knowing the contents of their own collections, archivists also know other sources of information in other locations to which they can send people. All in all, resource allocators perceive archivists as active people who spend a great deal of time fulfilling the purpose of the archives and seeing to it that interested people make use of the contents.

"They provide extensive reference service. They help people find records and show them how to use them. They don't do the research for them, but go to considerable lengths to help find the materials and show them how to use them. It's almost a teaching experience."

(Government)

"Reference services. They provide information by letter, telephone, and in the reference room itself. They must seek out the material that

people want, provide photocopying and micro-filming services. Advise people on publication, like whom you can quote. They're engaged in public-relations activities, tours, exhibits and seminars."

(Educational)

"They give you the catalog records and they give you advice and tips based on knowledge that goes beyond the catalog. They also often advise users of other sources elsewhere and sometimes help evaluate the importance of the materials."

(Other)

"They have to know where to send people for the information. We have records for all the communities of Los Angeles and just knowing where to send people to ferret out the information is very important."

(Government)

"They help patrons with such things as genealogical research, help newspapers researching an event in the past. They help students working on social studies projects. They make copies of documents which verify someone's background. They help writers find background materials."

(Other)

Archivists are thought to derive many satisfactions from their work. In addition to their varied professional qualifications, archivists are thought of as preservationists. As such, one main reward they get from their work is the knowledge that they are preserving history through the maintenance of documents and records. They are seen to like knowing that the material they are organizing and caring for will be available to many future generations. With their strong orientation to history, they enjoy handling and dealing with valuable, important and unique documents that are entrusted to them. They like the intellectual challenge of tracking down and locating hard-to-find information. Because they are so service minded, another special reward is

helping people find what they are looking for. All in all, they enjoy knowing that if it were not for their efforts, much important historical information would not be available.

"They get to handle historical documents which may have special significance. They have preserved items that may have been lost to historians if it had not been for them. They like the intellectual challenge."

(Government)

"The act of discovery. They are so excited about coming across something. It's a real emotional experience to be able to make a tangible connection between the present and the past."

(Government)

"I think it would be very satisfying to have someone come up and say, 'I need such and such information. I don't suppose you could help me with this, could you?' and they can."

(Other)

"The knowledge that they are preserving the past and it will last far beyond their own existence. I've been in touch with many archivists and I know they feel this way."

(Other)

"The archivist must really be a public-service professional who has a deep commitment to public service. That's the reward, wanting and liking to serve the public."

(Government)

As described by most resource allocators, the satisfactions that archivists receive tend to be private and personal. Some respondents, however, touch upon rewards that are more tangible and overt. One points out that archivists take pleasure in their professionalism and expertise, since they cannot expect great monetary rewards in the way of salary. Others say that archivists are pleased when they receive

recognition and praise for their efforts, although the implication is that such compliments are infrequent. One points out that archivists sometimes receive public recognition for their work in the form of an author's acknowledgement in a published book.

"The opportunity to do a professional job well. They're never going to make a lot of money, so their rewards are in the satisfaction of a job well done."

(Educational)

"It is a feeling of accomplishment when they find the answer to a question someone has asked. A sense of satisfaction in getting the material organized and accessible for use. It is always nice when they receive acknowledgment for having done research and for organizing the materials."

(Educational)

"Being able to assist people in their endeavors. Assembling and recognizing history. Another reward might be recognition of their work from the powers that be."

(Educational)

"They are rewarded when information from their holdings gets published. The fact that a book comes out and they have helped the author to get the research done and they may see that they get their name printed as having helped the author. It's like they are deserving of a medal."

(Government)

There is an unwillingness to stereotype archivists. When resource allocators are asked to discuss the personal characteristics that they associate with archivists, they describe them as intelligent, scholarly people with inquiring minds and an enduring love of history. Archivists are thought to enjoy working and interacting with other people, especially in a research or information-gathering setting. In many cases, their interests are thought to be in the areas



of literature, music and other cultural and fine arts. Overall, however, archivists are described as reflecting as wide a range of interests and hobbies as would be found in any other professional group. Resource allocators generally feel that archivists have certain professional and educational traits that unite them as a group, but as people they are diverse individuals who do not fit into a particular personality mold.

"They seem to be well educated, bright, articulate. Ours have a wide range of outside interests. Lots of their activities tend to revolve around history, but our archives director is an accomplished singer with professional credits."

(Other)

"They are active, fun-loving people. They are dedicated to a cause without thinking of just the profit for themselves. They enjoy research almost to the point of being a detective."

(Government)

"People who are inquisitive, great intellectual curiosity, love of interacting with other people. They're just like any other person. I don't stereotype them. They're all different."

(Educational)

"They're people just like you and me. They're no different. They have affairs, drink too much, do all the things anybody else would do. They are perhaps a bit more scholarly, but basically nothing sets them apart as a typical archivist."

(Other)

"They are interested in history and the forces of culture and how documents are related to history. They are cultivated people who go to concerts and read a lot. They are nice people. They are often collectors. I know some of them collect rare books."

(Educational)

"They're normal people. They have an interest in history. They're normal and do things like drink beer and go to movies. They are mainstream people."

(Other)

In spite of this resistance to characterizing archivists, a few cliches do occasionally creep into resource allocators' descriptions. While they are generally positive and complimentary in their descriptions, a few respondents include comments that suggest a stereotype, saying that archivists are sometimes retiring, introverted people who like to work alone. Occasionally, they are said to be "bookworms" who enjoy detail work and who derive pleasure from the act of organizing and systematizing, of bringing order out of chaos.

"They are scholars, but there is a lot of variety among archivists. They may be a retiring personality. They may like to work alone and like detail work. Most archivists are culturally inclined and like to go to historical meetings."

(Government)

"Scholars with a history background, people who appreciate the archives. Archivists that I've known are just as varied as anyone else. Some are a lot like librarians, quiet and mousy. They're interested in academic kinds of things, lectures, musicals, cultural things."

(Educational)

"I think most of them are bookworms. They are generally history buffs, somewhat introverted."

(Government)

"Archivists are project-oriented people. They love to take a mess and make some order of it. They love the idea of the preservation of things."

(Educational)

A couple of respondents characterize archivists as inordinately possessive of their collections. Their impression is that archivists feel they "own" the archives and seem unwilling to share the materials with other people.

"Some have kind of an air of proprietorship about them that kind of puts you off. They're kind of guardians and don't really want you using the archives. I feel the value is in sharing."

(Other)

"They're people with inquiring minds. I really like and appreciate them as people. They have a proprietary sense. Many of them are quite territorial. They're cultured, intellectual, sensitive people."

(Government)

Archivists are accorded high status but do not have a strong impact on organizational policy. According to resource allocators, archivists occupy a position of prestige in the firm or institution. They are not technicians, but are professionals with valued credentials and with important functions to perform. When they are assigned a rung on the organizational ladder, they are generally described as being about the third tier down from top management, or comparable to the upper stratum of middle management. Archivists are considered to be at a higher level than librarians. In the university setting, they are lower in rank than professors. It is not viewed as a growth position. Archivists are not expected to be elevated to a higher management position, partly because this is the way the hierarchy is constructed and partly because their needed skills could not be utilized if they did not have direct involvement with the archival materials.

Most resource allocators are satisfied with this situation and see no need for changes. They believe that archivists are at the appropriate position in the hierarchical structure and that their professional stature elicits respect from other staff members.

"He's middle management. There are two tiers above him. It's a high professional status, a support role with a sense of service. I would not want this changed. It couldn't be pulled up to full department-head level."

(Other)

"I would place the archivist in a senior position. The archivist has a very professional status. Although it's within the library structure, it's different than being a librarian."

(Educational)

"The archives should be recognized as an integral part of the business, not just something nice to have. Ours is located in the records management division and the archivists have a good professional status, like the legal department. No need for a change."

(Other)

"They are probably considered first-line supervisors, first-line management, somewhere in the middle of the hierarchy. They are viewed as a pure professional, even more so than a librarian. In our case, the archivist should not be higher than management, which is a very small part of the institution."

(Government)

"They have a high status because they receive special attention from our top officials here when they have special events or programs. From an organizational viewpoint, they are about the third tier from the top. I see no need for a change."

(Government)

"In our organization, it's not necessarily a stepping stone to greater things. This is the way it is and there's no reason to change anything."

(Other)

"They're at a high administrative level, reasonably high up in the structure. They're higher than the faculty rank of a librarian, not as high as a professor. There is no need to change their status."

(Educational)

Whatever their position in the hierarchy, archivists are expected to have responsibility for the archives themselves. They are described as being in charge of budget requests, supplies, equipment, support staff, all other decision-making duties relevant to their position.

"The director of the center has overall responsibility for it. We have three resources: the archives, the library and the museum. Each one of those has a director. They are of equal status, and they all report to me. It's a high level of professional status."

(Educational)

"The director of archives is directly responsible to the board. The archivist makes the budget, helps to select equipment, makes all major decisions in the building itself except for the architecture. I wouldn't like to see it changed."

(Educational)

Several resource allocators would like to see some changes in the archivists' situation, not necessarily in the actual positions they occupy but in the way they are viewed by others and in the way they are compensated. Some wish that co-workers would recognize archivists' solid professional stature and accord them the respect they deserve. Others wish that archivists would receive more public credit and recognition for the important work they do. Still others wish that archivists would receive higher salaries.

"We think very highly of the archivists because their work is so valuable to us. Their professional status is not high enough. It's been a struggle to get people to think of them as higher on the professional ladder."

(Other)

"They're part of the professional staff. The archives are a unit of the library itself. I think they are equal in stature with any other

library unit, but they don't always get the credit they deserve from others."

(Educational)

"Within the library, they are a department. A librarian and an archivist have about an equal status. I'd like to see the archivists have a better salary."

(Educational)

"She heads a department within the research center. She's a supervisor who reports to a manager, who reports to a director, who reports to a vice president. I'd like to see her pay scale upgraded, but she's positioned properly."

(Other)

Given these basic attitudes toward the status of archivists, it is not surprising that only a few resource allocators say that archivists have an influence on organizational policy. In some cases, archivists may also hold down other positions that give them greater authority and more voice in policy decisions. In some, perhaps smaller, settings, all professionals may be called on and encouraged to share their ideas and opinions as these may affect the way the organization is run; in these situations, the archivist may have input on policy equal to that of others.

"They have a high role here. They're called on to plan general policy as well as running the archives. That's the way it should be."

(Other)

"The head of our archives teaches and is on the faculties of the history department and the department of urban affairs. He is very active on the University Senate and other university committees. He plays a very heavy role in influencing policy."

(Educational)

"They're as involved as anyone else in committee work, grant proposals, etc. Everyone has influence, to some degree. All are asked for input and we share our thoughts and ideas. The archivists are not left out, by any means."

(Educational)

The more typical pattern is for resource allocators to say that archivists have a great impact on the way archives are organized and maintained. In this sense, they influence policy as it pertains to the archives. Resource allocators feel that archivists have an indirect influence on policy because they have collected and organized the organization's history, they know how and where to find important data from the past, and they provide this information to people who want background to help them make decisions for the present and plans for the future. While this indirect influence may be subtle, it is also thought to be meaningful and important. The consensus, however, is that archivists do not have a real impact on overall policy. It is not part of their professional function and they are not at the top management level at which these decisions and resolutions are made.

"She has very little influence on policy. This is a Fortune 500 company, so her influence is small. Her success depends on how well she negotiates with other groups in the company. I feel neutral about this, but I think it's fine the way it is."

(Other)

"They have influence in areas that impinge on recordkeeping of any kind. They manage the records, etc., of the jury system. As our archives grow and continue to expand, so will the duties and responsibilities of the archivist."

(Government)

"They have the full rein of archival policy here. The person the archivist reports to knows absolutely nothing about archives."

Therefore, the archivists must be self-starters who create policy, make recommendations, etc. In that regard, they obviously exercise great influence in the organizational policy of the archives."

(Other)

"The archivist plays an important role in our institution because of their uniqueness and their handling of the one-of-a-kind material. I can't say that the archivist influences our organizational policy in any way. That's just not part of their function."

(Educational)

"Because the archivist is the keeper of our very history, she plays a very important role in the overall function of this institution. However, she doesn't influence organizational policy to any degree."

(Educational)

"In the library, she has as much say as anyone, but in our overall hospital structure, she just supplies information that may influence policy. That's fine. We can't all be policy makers. Too many cooks spoil the broth."

(Other)

In sum, it seems evident that resource allocators have much regard and respect for archivists and for the services they perform. They wish that this esteem were more widely shared by other people so that archivists would receive the credit, recognition and monetary compensation that they deserve. Archivists do not influence policy because their position -- while accorded a certain stature -- is not a high level of management. In spite of this qualified recognition, resource allocators believe that archivists are given a suitable and appropriate professional status within the organizational structure.



## III

PUBLIC AWARENESS  
OF ARCHIVES

This chapter describes how resource allocators see archivists relating to the public. They focus especially on how people find out about the existence of different archives and what efforts can and should be done about increasing this public awareness.

The general public does not seem well informed about archives, their locations and their contents. The typical view among resource allocators is that the average person has only vague notions about archives. In addition, many people go through life without having a need for the information contained in these repositories, so they do not face the issue of having to locate them. It is assumed that the average person trying to find an archive will probably follow a circuitous, somewhat haphazard path.

"Other than the Smithsonian, I don't think anyone knows where archives are located. In some cases, the school system will direct students to an archives. I ran into archives strictly by accident. I walked into an institution and found out it was an archives."

(Government)

"I don't know how most people find out about archives. I find out myself through the state historical society and through word of mouth."

(Educational)

"I guess people look in the Yellow Pages or get a referral from research institutions. I learned about them through referrals."

(Other)

Resource allocators assume that people who are serious in their quest for archival information (even if they do not know that the information is located in an archives) can eventually find the appropriate source if they are patient and diligent. Respondents construct a typical scenario in which a person with informational needs might first consult a familiar and handy source, such as a teacher or a library, for information on what course to pursue. Through word of mouth and referrals, as he follows various contacts relevant to his search, he will ultimately be led to the archives that contain what he is looking for. Along the way he might also encounter directories that list various archives and their contacts.

"Usually they follow a string. They will ask someone, go to the library or to an individual who has some specialized knowledge and follow referrals to where someone has the information they need. I've known about them for so long I don't remember when I first learned about archives."

(Government)

"First of all, to need archives, you are usually doing research of some kind. You will be led by your subject from one source to another. As you follow the subject over time, it's liable to take you anywhere, including the archives. You will probably have to ask a lot of questions of a lot of people."

(Other)

"People generally learn from public libraries. Libraries need to know what is available and what archives exist to enable them to direct the people to the archive."

(Educational)

"For most of the general public, archives and archivists have always seemed so arcane. They picture archivists poring over old pieces of paper in a damp, dark cellar, which, of course, is not true. As far as finding out about the archives, most people call their

public library for information and they are then generally referred to the proper archives. There are also certain directories which people can consult."

(Government)

Archivists differ in the efforts they make to let people know about their archives. Some resource allocators say that their archivists are very active in this regard. They say that their archivists try to get widespread publicity about their collections, especially when they get new acquisitions. Newsletters, catalogs and other publications are mailed out or made available to the public. Some archivists make personal presentations to schools and other organizations to explain what their archives contain and how they can be used.

"I think our archivists do pretty well in this. They publish a publication called 'Center Line' six times a year. They list collections and some of the things that are going on. We also have a general mailing once a month. We publish information in the 'Society of American Archivists.'"

(Educational)

"In our case, we have a lot of newspaper publicity. We try to tell people when we get a new set of records. We also have a newsletter that goes out to over 100 members of our organization."

(Other)

"My archivist spreads the gospel through the media and education. He goes to schools, has slide presentations on the archives. Displays are put up around the city that show that the records are here and are to be used."

(Government)

"On a quarterly basis we let people know through professional journals. We issue press releases on collections we are opening. Annually or semi-annually we publish a list of our holdings for people who make inquiries."

(Government)

"In the past they have not been that active, but that has certainly changed in the past few years, particularly in the municipal archives. We now publish a book that comes out four times a year and details items accessioned by the archives and any archival activities of interest to the public."

(Government)

Other resource allocators say that their archivists do not make much or any effort to heighten public awareness. At one extreme, the archivists in a business or industry setting may not want to publicize their collections at all because they are considered private information for internal use. In some university settings, faculty and students may be told what is available, but little is done about communicating to the general public. Some archivists may be active only at certain times, such as when planning a special exhibit or working on a commemoration, and are less active the rest of the year. Occasionally, resource allocators say that their archivists seem unwilling to make any effort, preferring to let people come to them to see what is contained in the archives. It is pointed out that these promotional and public relations efforts require money, and the archives may not have the budget for this purpose, however much they may want to publicize their collections.

"Depends on the type of archives you're talking about. Private business is not very good about letting the general public know what is available, because it is proprietary information. Other archives are engaged in a continuing effort to inform the public."

(Other)

"To the general public, there are probably not enough communications. Within the academic community, you have a built-in system. Faculty and students come to see what is there for their needs."

(Educational)

"It seems as if they're active if something big is taking place, like an anniversary or centennial. They become less active after it's over. I think this is true of most archives, whether university or other."

(Educational)

"I think it varies from institution to institution, depending on the staff and how able they are to get out and say what they have. Here, we are not publicizing very much. We need to be out there a bit more."

(Educational)

"Not very active. I think they only communicate when asked. We sit and wait for people to come to us."

(Educational)

"We're not too active. We need money to publish lists of what we have available."

(Government)

"They could prepare exhibits and put out brochures and other publications. It's mainly that archivists don't have enough money to do those things. They are knowledgeable people, but without funds, what can they do?"

(Educational)

Resource allocators are of two minds regarding the benefits of increasing public awareness of archives. On the one hand, they say that archives cannot and should not be simply storehouses of facts. They believe that the information is there to be used and, therefore, it should be made readily accessible to as many people as possible. They say that there are many avenues for promoting and publicizing archives.

-- The various media are cited. Promotion can be communicated through newspapers and on radio or television. Direct advertising in a variety of sources could reach potential users.

"We need to do more advertising. It would bring more business and that's more justification for maintaining the archives."

(Other)

"More public relations, advertising, feature stories, newspaper coverage and advertising to the research community. Hopefully, the benefits would be in greater usage of the archives."

(Other)

- Publications are another resource. Professional journals might include articles based on research in the archives; they could also include notices of the materials contained and of recent acquisitions. The archives could publish and circulate newsletters, directories, catalogs detailing their contents. Computer technology could allow tie-ins with other archives to share information.

"Continue to make directories and listings available. Catalogs, brochures, exhibits, timely articles about new materials received. It would encourage more use by the public."

(Other)

"Use the media more. If special things of interest are received, a newsletter could be prepared by the archivist and sent to other researchers. By becoming automated more and more, we can become available nationally and even internationally. Technology is a way of increasing our ability to share."

(Educational)

- Archivists might present physical evidence of what their archives contain. Exhibits and displays built around archival records of general interest might be set up. The public could be invited to a tour or an open house to become acquainted with the collections.

"Publish pamphlets describing the archives and the material contained in them. Have exhibits. Show the public some of the things in the archives. If the public knew what they were, they'd probably use them more."

(Other)

"Institutions like ours could have open house and invite the public to come see what we have done. We could have them visit the archives and our oral-history room where we have videotapes of older citizens."

(Other)

- Personal contacts might be made with the public. The archivist might visit schools and other public outlets to talk about and demonstrate what is available and to educate people on how to use archives.

"They could give talks about the archives. There should be more done at the schools to inform students of our existence. More information should be disseminated to the public so they would have a knowledge of where to go for research."

(Other)

"At the high school level and the undergraduate level, I'd say that it should be a requirement that students visit an archive. The younger generation would have an understanding and perhaps use them in their adult life and at least understand the function of archives."

(Government)

- One respondent suggests that the Society of American Archivists might take a more active and forceful role in promoting archives in general, perhaps by providing publishing facilities where archival materials could be promoted.

"I think that the Society of American Archivists should be more active in serving as a publishing outlet for those working on important collections. They should publish a journal by subject area to call attention to unique collections. As it is now, there is no real outlet for publishing abstracts on archival work. Of course, people put notes in professional journals, but that is only the tip of the iceberg."  
(Government)

On the other hand, resource allocators wonder about the necessity or worth of increasing public awareness of archives. This position is most often taken by those affiliated with educational or government institutions. Some university archives are not open to the general public, so promotion in this case seems unjustified. Aside from that situation, resource allocators have two main rationales for explaining their resistance to publicizing their archives. First, there is the worry that if they were to attract large crowds of people who were "browsers" rather than serious researchers, this could result in over-use of -- and potential damage to -- the materials, particularly those that are especially valuable. Second, there is the view that people who have real and "serious" informational needs already are familiar with archives or would know how to go about finding them. Thus, these people do not need to be informed through promotion or publicity. Furthermore, widespread promotion would reach people who have no need or desire to use archival materials, so it seems self-defeating to spend the money and time on this effort.

"There aren't any reasons for the public to be informed about our archives. We are not available for public use."  
(Educational)

"I'm not sure the situation should be changed. The archives are established for researchers and scholars. Preservation is a major problem for archives, so I'm not sure you want thousands of people coming through every day. I feel most people who need to use it know about it. I'm not sure archives are heavy candidates for heavy promotion."  
(Government)



"I'm not sure that we want a great increase in public awareness. Our material is fragile, and over-use can destroy it. I don't think you really create a need to use the archives. You just make it known what you have and then try to match the public to what you have available."

(Educational)

"They need to leave a general impression that the archives exist and what is contained. I'm not sure we want to actively recruit business for the archives. We don't want browsers. We need to accomplish awareness that something they might want could be found there."

(Educational)

"I don't know if the public needs to be informed. Most people aren't interested and have no need for archives in their day-to-day lives."

(Other)

"The search is directed by need. If the need isn't there, I'm not sure that heightening public awareness would accomplish anything."

(Educational)

These attitudes illustrate some ambivalence among resource allocators. They want to let people know about their archival collections, and they like knowing that the collections are fulfilling their purpose. However, they want this use to be made by the appropriate information seekers and researchers. In a sense, they are proud and possessive of their archives and do not want them used by people who may not fully appreciate them.

Underscoring these views is the issue of funding. Promotion requires money. Also, if the archives attracted great numbers of people, that would increase the workload of the archivists, requiring the hiring of additional staff, and more money.

