

Introduction

"It's all on the internet" is an expression one hears quite often these days, mostly from high school students and college undergraduates. The internet has made finding information on a wide range of topics faster and easier than ever before. Unfortunately not all information is on the internet and probably never will be. In no area of research is this more true than with research involving the use of unique primary sources.

The internet has been of great assistance in allowing archival repositories to share more information about their holdings than ever before. The majority of archives now have their own web presence, giving researchers contact information, hours of service, and descriptions of collections. Few however have had the time or means necessary to digitize entire collections. This is understandable when one considers that digitization is labor intensive and collections may run to millions of pages. Many collections that have been digitized have been done so via grant dollars, rather than general operating funds.

Many of us grow up using libraries. The local public library is familiar in communities large and small, urban and rural. Many of us first use libraries as children in the Juvenile section, and later we browse the current best sellers, find a how-to-do-it book, or research a particular topic from encyclopedias and other popular reference sources. For most familiar with using public libraries as a source of information, finding and using archival information for the first time may be a challenge. Most library materials are

published materials, also known as secondary sources, while most archival material is unique, referred to as primary sources. Library materials are usually duplicated in other libraries, while archival material is not. Library material, if lost, is usually replaceable. Archival material, because it is unique, is usually not replaceable.

While we are free to browse through most library material, archival material is kept in secured areas away from the public and may not be browsed. Archival information may sometimes be found in public libraries, but more often it is located in governmental agencies, historical societies, museums, or academic libraries. Archival material from one source may be scattered throughout the United States or around the world. Consider the case of James Michener. A prolific writer, Michener produced dozens of novels that sold millions of copies. To research his novels he traveled extensively, and left research material wherever he had done the research. Hence Michener papers may be found at the Library of Congress, Swarthmore College, the University of Alaska, the University of Hawaii, the University of Miami Florida, the University of Northern Colorado, the University of Pennsylvania, and the University of Texas. For someone doing research on Michener, this presents a definite challenge. Michener is an extreme example but illustrates the fugitive nature of archival material.

It follows that because archival information is unique, it tends to be found in only one physical location, a challenge to the researcher.

Information about a particular library's holdings were traditionally found in a paper card catalog and more recently in the on-line public access catalog (PAC), and national databases document the vast majority of printed material. Guides and indexes to archival information on the other hand are often unpublished or available only in-house and may be difficult to locate. Archives often operate with smaller staffs and shorter hours than do libraries, or by appointment only.

What Are Archives?

To understand archives one must first understand records. Simply put, a record is any document that contains information. Archives are those records that have been determined to be of enduring value, perhaps only five percent of all created records. This enduring value may be based upon historical, legal, or administrative factors. Like published material, archival material comes in a variety of formats. The most common format is still paper (despite the digital revolution), but may also include photographs, film, video cassettes, or computer disks. The term archives may itself be confusing because it refers not only to records of enduring value but also may refer to a specific department within a larger institution ("That is located in the Archives.").

There are several types of archives. An institutional archive is one that collects only material generated in house, such as a corporate archive. A collecting archive collects material based on a subject or theme, such as a

military archives. Many archives are a combination of these two types.

Archival Terminology

Like most professionals, archivists have a select vocabulary to describe various functions. It is helpful for the researcher to have a basic understanding of some of the more commonly used terms used by archivists.

Accession : an acquisition, a new collection coming to the archives. To accession a collection means to take legal and physical custody.

Processing : the act of arranging and describing a collection to make it usable by researchers. Arrangement and description are two of the archivists primary responsibilities of archivists.

Finding Aid : A finding aid is a guide, index, or inventory of a collection, usually describing a collection at the file folder level. Finding aids may or may not be published.

Contacting the Archives

Before contacting an archival institution, the researcher must first determine if it is in fact archival material that is really needed. It is best to fully exhaust all secondary sources in your subject area before turning to primary materials. This serves two purposes. First of all, the researcher may find that the answers to all of the questions sought are all available in secondary sources, and archival research is unnecessary.

Secondly, it is always best to become familiar with published materials in a given subject area because it will make the use of archival materials much

easier. If the researcher is aware of key names and dates less time must be spent navigating entire archival collections. Information about a particular research subject may be found in published books, periodicals, and newspapers, as well as web sites. Checking bibliographies will lead to further published sources.

If the researcher finds that indeed archival material will be needed, the next step is locating where primary sources may be found. Much of the contents of this book will be devoted to providing the researcher guidance on finding the location archival material on a wide range of subjects. Once material has been located, the researcher may request a copy of a finding aid to particular collection if it is not available on-line.

A finding aid is usually Once the finding aid is reviewed the next decision point for the researcher is whether an actual trip to the archives is necessary. It is possible that the staff of a particular repository may be able to answer simple requests for information by mail, e-mail, fax, or phone. Some material may be available on microfilm through interlibrary loan, or may be photocopied and mailed by archives staff if the quantity is small.

Some archives set a time limit, say fifteen minutes to a half hour, that they will research a particular question for free. Questions taking longer than that may incur a staff fee or the researcher may be referred to an independent fee based researcher for help. Many archives maintain lists of independent researcher who perform this service. Independent researchers may also be utilized if the remote location of the archives makes a trip

impractical.

If the researcher is able to make a trip to the archives, it is always best to first phone ahead. As previously mentioned, archives often have irregular hours and small staffs. Many archives are open weekdays only and rarely in the evening, though there are exceptions. Fortunately, technology has made archival institutions more accessible. Many archives may be contacted not only by phone or mail, but also by fax, or by e-mail. Contact information for a large number of archival repositories will be found in this book. Making an appointment ahead of time not only assures access but also allows staff to retrieve any materials that may be stored off site if necessary.

Archival Etiquette

When visiting an archives the researcher will be presented with a list of rules and regulations that may seem alien to those only familiar with the more traditional library setting. The researcher will probably be asked to fill out a user form, asking name, address, phone number, the purpose of the visit, and material requested. A driver's license or other form of identification may be requested. While this may seem to the uninitiated as an unnecessary invasion of privacy, it is simply standard practice. If an item is later missing or damaged, it is useful for archives staff to know who last used it. Information forms are also used for statistical purposes, tracking the time of day when collections are most heavily used, or what types of materials are being requested most frequently. This will help the archives

staff in better serving future users.

While in a typical library browsing is the norm, in the archival environment material is closed access and must be retrieved by staff. Material may not leave the area and the researcher will usually find that they are watched while using archival material. This is not meant as a personal affront, but once again is standard practice to ensure the preservation of unique materials.

Rules And Regulations

Besides filling out a form, the researcher will often be asked to read a copy of local guidelines for the use of archival material. Typical rules and regulations may include :

No coats, briefcases or backpacks at the reading table. This is a security measure to prevent theft of manuscript material. You may usually check these items with the staff when entering the reading room area.

No pens - pencil only. This is to prevent damage to the materials.

No hand held scanners. This serves two purposes. It prevents any potential damage to materials and also prevents extensive copying which may violate copyright.

Photocopying

Photocopying is permitted in most archival institutions, within limits and depending upon the particular restrictions of the collection. Archives staff will usually perform the copying, and for this reason photocopy charges may be expensive, 50 cents to one dollar is not uncommon. Some

collections may be restricted from copying, because the collection is fragile or restricted in some way.

Copyright

Finding archival material is one thing, being able to use it is another. The user of archival material must be especially aware of copyright law. It is a common misunderstanding that only published works are covered under copyright law, but this is not the case. The current copyright law of the United States, known as Title 17, U.S. Code, took effect on January 1, 1978.

It protects both published and unpublished material.

Copyright is the rights given to an author or creator to :

1. Reproduce
2. Prepare derivative works based upon the original work.
3. Distribute copies by sale, lease, or rent.
4. Publicly perform (music, drama, dance, etc.)
5. Display the work.

Copyright however does not apply to everything. Some things are not protected. These include :

1. Titles
2. Names
3. Short phrases
4. Slogans
5. Ideas

6. Procedures

7. Methods

8. Systems and processes

9. Concepts

The concept of *fair use* also limits copyright. Fair use allows for the use of copyrighted material for :

1. Criticism

2. Comment

3. News reporting

4. Teaching

5. Scholarship or research

6. Preservation

Up until the passage of new copyright legislation in 1976, unpublished material was not subject to same copyright protection as published material was unless it was registered in the copyright office. This is no longer the case.

Material is now considered to be subject to copyright when it is "fixed" by writing, filming, creating a work of art, etc. Web pages are covered by copyright. Copyright remains in force for the life of the author plus seventy years.

When thinking of copyright in terms of archival material, it is important to always keep in mind that physical ownership and intellectual ownership are two separate things. Today, when a collection is acquired by an archival

repository copyright is usually transferred along with the physical custody of the material, but this was not always the case in the past, and many archives now spend much time and effort trying to track down individuals who donated material long ago to acquire copyright. Unless the deed of gift specifically transferred to the archives copyright it remains with the donor. This is not so much an issue with institutional archives such as corporate archives that only collect material generated in house, but it is an issue for collecting repositories such as historical societies. Archival material generated by governmental agencies is usually not subject to copyright and may be freely used. Photographs may be especially tricky, because there is the issue not only of the rights of the photographer but also the persons photographed who must give permission for photos to be used. An exception to this are public figures such as politicians or entertainers.

Many collection level descriptions of collections and finding aids to particular collections will describe copyright status, but not always. The archivist will discuss with the researcher any issues of copyright that may apply to the collection being requested. Copyright may be waived by the archives or by the original donor if it was not waived at the time the collection was donated to the institution. How the collection is to be used is the critical factor.

Fees

If the researcher seeks information that is to be used for a commercial publication or for profit there may be a use fee charged by the archives.

This most commonly pertains to photographs or works of art, and are often referred to Commercial Service Fees. Whether the reproduction is for a book, magazine, newspaper, poster, postcard, videotape, or motion picture, fees are usually based on the number of copies being produced. For example, fees may be larger for mass market book publication than they would be for smaller academic press runs. Fees are also larger for commercially produced, national film or television projects than they would be for smaller local area productions. Typically these fees range from \$10 to \$150.

For an excellent introduction to archives and archival procedures, visit the National Archives of Canada web site at :

http://www.archives.ca/04/0416_e.html

Though Canadian in origin, the information given applies to researchers of material found in any country.