2009

Historical archaeologists' utilization of archives: an exploratory study

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.31979/etd.465z-nqtt>

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HISTORICAL ARCHAEOLOGISTS' UTILIZATION OF ARCHIVES: AN
EXPLORATORY STUDY

A Thesis

Presented to

The Faculty of the School of Library and Information Science

San José State University

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Library and Information Science

by

Elizabeth Ann Borchardt

May 2009

UMI Number: 1470967

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HISTORICAL ARCHAEOLOGISTS' UTILIZATION OF ARCHIVES: AN
EXPLORATORY STUDY

by

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ABSTRACT

HISTORICAL ARCHAEOLOGISTS' UTILIZATION OF ARCHIVES: AN EXPLORATORY STUDY

by Elizabeth Ann Borchardt

Until now, archival user studies focused primarily on historians and genealogists. However, other user groups use archival materials as part of their research. This thesis seeks to provide introductory research specifically examining historical archaeologists as an archival user group. To this end, a survey was conducted online to ascertain how historical archaeologists locate and use archival materials. An interview with one historical archaeologist was also conducted to corroborate the findings of the survey. The responses from these sources indicate that historical archaeologists in general have similar research concerns as historians and genealogists regarding the use and access of archival materials. These results combined with the previous user group studies suggest that archives need to increase their online presence, especially through finding aids and catalog searches.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank Dr. Debbie Hansen for all her guidance in turning this from a simple paper into a true thesis. Thanks are due to Lori Lindberg for encouraging me to pursue the thesis track and believing that the selected topic had merit and to Dr. Marco Meniketti for giving much needed advice on historical archaeologists. I also owe Supriya Wronkiewicz many thanks for being my second pair of eyes during the writing process.

My husband, Josh, deserves much love and many thanks for being so supportive through the whole graduate school and thesis process.

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Chapter 1. Introduction

Historical archaeology is the intersection between traditional archaeology and historical research using archival resources. Historical archaeologists use the interaction between documents and objects to describe the past. To do so, they must find and access historical texts commonly stored in archival repositories. Depending on the documents and their locations, some are cataloged fully, while others are uncataloged and remain in obscurity. Most documents fall between these two extremes.

At any archival repository, an archivist's duty is to make available the documents in his/her care. Collections of documents are organized and cataloged. Finding aids describing the collection are made available for researchers. Some collections, collection catalogs, and finding aids are available online, while others must be viewed in person on location.

Archivists organize information about collections to facilitate access and usage of the documents by a variety of researchers. However, the question remains: How can archivists make collections easier for researchers to find? What processes do researchers use to find the things they are looking for in archives? Do these processes differ depending on the user group?

This thesis aims to examine how historical archaeologists use archives as part of their research of archaeological sites. Does the nature of their research affect how they search for documentary evidence? Do historical archaeologists have needs that differ from those of other archival users? How can archivists aid historical archaeologists in their research? These questions are important, for without finding and accessing the

documents kept in archives, potentially valuable historical information goes unused, lessening our understanding of the past.

The Field of Historical Archaeology

The idea of historical archaeology has existed as long as the field of archaeology. Early archaeologists used archaeology to investigate known historical events, the most famous example being Schliemann's search for Troy. However, it was not until the 1960s that historical archaeology became a distinct field of its own with the founding of the Society of Historical Archaeology in 1967 (Schuyler, 1972).

While the field generally applies to United States sites that date from time periods with written history, historical archaeology has a slightly different meaning to different archaeologists. Some archaeologists approach historical archaeology as the examination of European colonial expansion into the New World. Other archaeologists see historical archaeology purely as archaeology supported by textual evidence (Andrén, 1998; Hall & Silliman, 2006). Still others see historical archaeology as a blend of artifacts and texts that leads to new knowledge about the past (Deetz, 1996; Galloway, 2006b). One could make the argument that historical archaeology is "valid for the whole world in all periods when writing has existed" (Andrén, 1998, p. 102).

At its most basic level, historical archaeology is composed of two parts – the artifacts recovered from an archaeological site and the associated documents, whether they relate to the site, any persons related to the site, or the time period in general. Leone and Potter (1988) indicate that documents aid in descriptions of how people and objects relate. They posit that documents illustrate how people used the artifacts uncovered at

archaeological sites. Deetz (1996) stresses that “taken together, inventories and archaeological assemblages give a more detailed and complete picture than either could alone” (p. 15). Galloway (2006b) indicates that both archaeological and documentary evidence “may be manipulated to discover how they fit with one another to construct yet more kinds of evidence” of how people lived (p. 11).

This new evidence, found through combining artifact and text, helps historical archaeologists better focus on groups that traditionally lack a significant voice in history. “Historical archaeologists are increasingly concerned with identity – with the intersection of race, class, gender, and ethnicity and the ways in which the material world is deployed as a form of expression” (Hall & Silliman, 2006, p. 12). The combination of material culture and documents can reveal the silent peoples of history. Historical archaeologists are increasingly digging at sites that give a view into marginalized groups. André (1998) gives a cross-section of examples:

[H]istorical archaeologists today are also working with such topics as the effect of colonialism on the original population (Lewis, 1984), Chinatowns (Schuyler, 1980), Spanish settlement (Deagan, 1983), slave plantations (Singleton, 1985), black tenants after the Civil War (Orser, 1988a), and more general issues of race, ethnicity, and class (see Little, 1994). Moreover, more recent periods have been studied, such as mining communities (Hardesty, 1988), industrial towns (Dickens, 1982; McGuire, 1991; Wurst, 1991), the consumption patterns of industrialized society (Spencer-Wood, 1987), and waste from modern cities (Rathje and Murphy, 1992). In the last few years, the gender perspective in various settings has also been emphasized, and the discipline has simultaneously been subject to feminist critique (cf. Seifert, 1991; Spencer-Wood 1994). (p. 99)

Even though marginalized groups did not write the documents, what is written and what is found at archaeological sites can be used to create a picture of the daily routines of their lives. In fact, historical archaeology is increasingly regarded as the field best able to

reveal information of this kind with many scholars declaring, “the role of historical archaeology is to give insight into little-known aspects of everyday life and to write the history of the invisible people” (Andrén, 1998, p. 101).

As historical archaeology has solidified as its own field, the use of documents as support for archaeological artifacts has increased, but the debate over which are more important – the artifacts or the texts – still remains.

Mark Leone, Constance A. Crosby, and Parker B. Potter, who believe that the actual relation between artifact and text has not been problematized to a great enough extent... stress that there is a fundamental difference between material culture and writing, since the traces are created on different occasions, for different purposes, and normally by different people. (Andrén, 1998, p. 102)

Barber (1994) believes that “in a few words, a document may resolve many points about which archaeologists using only physical remains could argue for years” (p. 5). The archaeology and documents both have strengths and weaknesses. Some question the need for archaeology when many documents exist, while others question the integrity of documents due to the subjective nature of their authors. However, archaeology and documents can be used to support each other. According to Galloway (2006b), the strengths of one can mitigate the weaknesses of the other. The artifacts and the texts can be used to verify one another and to form new theories and methodologies in historical archaeology. Beaudry (1988) states,

Many view archival material as a control lacking in prehistory. They tend to follow one of two paths in their research: they may use historical sites as test cases for models developed in prehistory; or they set out to discover whether archaeological evidence properly reflects the documentary record or *vice versa*. (p. 1)

This indicates that historical archaeology is akin to an experiment. Andrén (1998) even goes so far as to say that historical archaeology is “a form of laboratory where archaeological theory and method can be tested and developed” (p. 181). Historical archaeologists considering both artifacts and documents in their research can gain greater insight than one or the other would give alone.

The Field of Archives

As long as there have been textual materials, there have been people organizing their keeping. Libraries have taken on the task of keeping materials to be lent out to a select user group, be it students, professionals, or the public in general. Records managers keep watch over documents that must be kept for specific periods of time dictated by the government or the body collecting the records; documents frequently may be recalled for use for legal or business reasons – they are active records. Archivists keep documents that are no longer considered active, but still retain value.

Archives serve as the repository for documents determined to have lasting value. Archives retain the materials in the hope that they will be valued and used by future researchers. According to Thibodeau (2001), an “archives’ essential responsibility is to preserve and deliver authentic records to subsequent generations of users” (p. 1). However, this is only the beginning of an archives’ or an archivist’s responsibilities. Prominent experts have divergent opinions on what constitutes proper archival practice.

Archival theory. Sir Hilary Jenkinson (1984) believed that “[t]he outstanding feature of the Archive... is that it is by its nature unique [and] represents some measure of knowledge which does not exist in quite the same form anywhere else” (p.15).

Jenkinson saw archives as a collection of records and documents that came together organically, and they were to be kept in the order in which their creator had placed them. He understood that archives may be put together for some purpose, but future users may look at them differently (Jenkinson, 1984, p. 18).

T. J. Schellenberg (1956) defined archives as “[t]hose records of any public or private institution which are adjudged worthy of permanent preservation for reference and research purposes and which have been deposited or have been selected for deposit in an archival institution” (p. 16). Schellenberg’s theory indicates that the documents should be originally created or collected for a purpose in order to be considered for archival retention. These documents should then have a secondary use beyond their original purpose in order to be preserved (p. 13). Schellenberg gave his archivists the authority to place judgment upon items in the archive, as seen in his definition of archives. Those items judged worthy of preservation are the ones that are kept.

Appraisal. Selecting the materials that will remain in an archives is called appraisal. Terry Cook (1992) presents an appraisal theory, termed macro-appraisal, that examines the context in which a record was created in addition to the record itself. By discovering which record creating processes were the most important to the creator, the archivist can narrow down the range of records to examine with closer scrutiny. Then, by looking at the context of its creation, the archivist can make an informed decision on whether the record is important enough to retain. This creates a top-down appraisal system.

Why is a top-down appraisal system important? This process enables the archivist to look at the broader context of the records before making selections, thereby changing the scope of the appraisal. If the archivist looks at the purpose of a document rather than just the content, s/he will have a better idea of the importance of the document. Cook (1992) indicates that

in this “macro-appraisal” phase, archivists would seek to understand why records were created rather than what they contain, how they were created and used by their original users rather than how they might be used in the future, and what formal functions and mandates of the creator they supported rather than what internal structure or physical characteristics they may or may not have. Archivists would look at the reasons for and the nature of the communication between the citizen and the state – or any other institution for that matter – rather than at what was communicated. (p. 47)

Recognizing and appreciating the interaction between the citizen and the state/institution allows the archivist to see a portion of the society of which both the citizen and the institution are a part.

If not day-to-day or at any one moment, the departments and agencies of government will over time reflect the “image” of society, that is, they will reflect the public hopes, aspirations, activities, and frustrations articulated by its citizens, and the reflection will be most evident where the citizen-state interaction is most vigorous. (Cook, 1992, p. 50)

Using archives to form this “image” of the society in which the records were created furthers the idea that archives are not just repositories of documents, but also keepers of collective memory. Documents are created through the processes of people and society; those documents can give insight as to how the society functions. By understanding the societal processes, the archivist can make informed appraisal decisions.

Authenticity. The archivists making appraisal decisions for a use-based archive need to anticipate what scholars might wish to study in the future. But how can an

archivist know that one particular item may not one day hold the key to understanding some important aspect of history? The notion that archives are biased because of the selection process is being raised in historical circles.

There is emerging an argument that archives are not neutral in the process of historical inquiry. Absences may, in fact, be purposeful in a way that skews the historical record. Some scholars argue that archivists are in actuality complicit in affirmations of existing political structures and power relationships. Therefore, the absence of archive may invalidate a certain overly strict document-based notion of historical study, but the absence does not necessarily invalidate the historical reality of an individual or collective memory. (Blouin, 1999, pp. 104-105)

This is the conflict between archives and history; archives cannot contain everything ever written for there is too much to keep track of, yet, one important document can shed light on unknowns in the historical record. This is one side of the problem of the authenticity of archival materials. Appraisal occurs during a certain time period and is done by the people of that time. This can cause a biased history to be preserved simply because of the environment the collection was formed. The documents do not tell the entire story if materials are left out. "It is not the documents themselves that have been so corrupted, but rather the problem is in the process of selection and collection formation" (Blouin, 1999, p. 106). If appraisal is not done carefully, it can cause researchers to doubt the authenticity of the materials.

Another type of authenticity that affects archival materials applies to whether or not the documents are the actual documents they profess to be. Part of the reason to keep materials in an archives is to restrict access and prevent changes to documents. Duranti (1995) discusses how reliability comes from the process involved in a document's creation (p. 6), but authenticity is different from reliability.

Proving a record's authenticity does not make it more reliable than it was when created. It only warrants that the record does not result from any manipulation, substitution, or falsification occurring after the completion of its procedure of creation, and that it is therefore what it purports to be. (Duranti, 1995, p. 7-8)

However, the two concepts must be considered together for archival documents.

“Authentic, unreliable records are of no use to present and future users...” (Duranti, 1995, p. 8). It is up to the archivist to maintain the authenticity of reliable documents for researchers.

Users need to know that the record was made under controlled circumstances as part of the regular workflow, that it was made within a reasonable time after the occurrence of the facts it is about, and that it was generated by somebody who was competent to make that specific record, with either the duty or the direct interest to make it accurate. (Duranti, 1995, p. 9)

Researchers need to trust that the documents they are using meet these requirements of reliability and authenticity, and it is up to archivists to uphold these requirements.

Preservation. Materials are taken into an archival repository, but without an archivist, they simply reside in boxes. Jenkinson (1984) describes the role of the archivist as “put in the simplest terms... [taking] over such documents, [conserving] them, and [making] them available for study” (p.15). The archivist must preserve the materials for future generations of researchers. Processing includes placing materials in acid-free folders and boxes, thus slowing their deterioration by restricting the effects of acidity, and preventing distortion by arranging them in positions that prevent bending.

Jenkinson (1984) saw the archivist as a custodian – almost a guard – over the archival collection. The archivist is not to interpret the archive lest he misinterpret it. The archivist is not to change the original order lest he change any other person's interpretation of the archive. Jenkinson's archivist “has to govern his own and other

people's conduct in relation to the Archives in his charge as to preclude to the greatest possible extent, short of locking them up and refusing all access to them, any such modification" (p. 20). Schellenberg (1956) also makes the archivist custodian of his archives – overseeing its use and protection and preserving its integrity – but he does allow the archivist to rearrange the documents if necessary to better facilitate researcher access and use. The reason for the preservation of the integrity of the documents is that they may be used for research or legal purposes.

Arrangement and description. According to Roe (2005), "arrangement is the process of organizing materials with respect to their provenance and original order, to protect their context, and to achieve physical and intellectual control over the materials" (p. 11). This means that the archivist looks at the way the documents are arranged when they come to the archives and considers the way each document relates to the others and how the documents relate to their creator. The archivist looks for internal structure to the collection of documents and strives to keep them in their original order. Occasionally, the original order has been compromised and no longer has an organized structure or the documents of one provenance or grouping are interspersed with those of another grouping. When this occurs, the archivist "should establish an order relying on the principles of *provenance* and *original order* insofar as possible" (Roe, 2005, p. 11). Provenance and original order are important because they convey information about the context of the documents' creation and how the creator used them (Roe, 2005). The order of the documents as arranged by the creator gives almost as much information about a collection of documents as the documents themselves. Because of this, retaining

this original order is more important than organizing a collection for ease of use. Thus, archival collections are not organized by subject headings in the same manner as libraries, which can be frustrating to users.

After arranging the documents, the archivist must describe them. Description is more than just a listing of the documents. It presents information about the creation and use of the documents, sometimes including information about the creator or creating entity as well.

Information to manage and interpret the records is also essential to description. For example, it may be important for the archivist to know what preservation treatments were used over time so that conflicting chemicals or approaches will not be used. Similarly, understanding the context in which records were created, by whom, the era during which records were created, or the purpose for which the records were used may affect how a user interprets the content of those records. (Roe, 2005, p. 14)

In addition to the information about the background of the collection, the archivist may also describe the collection's materials. This description may occur at the collection level or at sub-groupings within the collection.

The result of description is a finding aid – a document describing the materials and the person who collected them in varying levels of detail. An in-depth finding aid may even include a list of the materials at the box or folder level. The finding aid is the gateway to a collection. However, the finding aid concentrates on the creator, the provenance, and the original order of a collection rather than the subject headings that apply. Subject headings may be a part of the finding aid, but they are not the main focus. This arrangement and description of the documents are the beginnings of making sure documents are preserved properly and that they can be accessed.

Access. The fundamental rationale for the preservation and description of archival materials is so someone may use them, at some time. When the arrangement process is complete and there has been a decision as to what documents shall be retained in the archives, the archivist must provide access to the materials.

Finding aids may be available on location, or be accessible via the repository's website, or both. Some archives participate in online union databases – one such example being the Online Archive of California, which lists encoded finding aids from University of California, California State University, and many other repositories in the state – enabling researchers to search the collections of multiple repositories at the same time. Some archives are putting their collection records in library OPACs so that they may be searched from various locations. It is also becoming more common for archives to make finding aids and individual catalog entries available in online catalog searches on their own websites. A new trend has repositories making digital scans of some documents available as well.

Archives have a mission to keep materials in perpetuity. Archives want and need researchers to find the documents they contain – why keep the materials otherwise? Access to the materials is a primary mission of archives, be it through the researchers seeing documents in person or through finding and viewing documents online.

Research Problem

Historical archaeologists' archival needs seem to differ from other researchers' needs as they are searching for information to complement the information they are recovering from the ground. However, the details of just how their needs differ are

unknown. Studies have been conducted on how similar user groups (i.e., historians) use archives, but none have focused on the specific needs of historical archaeologists. No published studies concerning historical archaeologists' use of archives were found during the literature review of this study.

There is a gap in archival knowledge concerning how historical archaeologists search for documents, how they find the documents they want and need, and how they incorporate those documents into their research. It is known that historical archaeologists use documentary research in tandem with uncovered artifacts (Deetz, 1996; Galloway, 2006a; Hall & Silliman, 2006; Leone & Potter, 1988); many historical archaeologists make note of their use of documentary evidence in their articles and books. For example, Deetz used probate records to examine contents of houses, and Layton (2002) used bills of lading to examine the cargo of a shipwreck. However, these uses do not offer any real indication of how they obtained these documents. Historical archaeologists do not discuss their research process in their published works. They regularly mention the use of archives and documents, but do not delve into how they found the information they sought. It is possible that they are accessing library collections for information, but like historians, they seem to prefer the type of original documentation that can be found in archives.

This study hopes to bring the perceived gap in knowledge to light and offer potential solutions to lessen any possible effects this knowledge gap may have on historical archaeologists' use of archives as well as aid archivists in bettering the service

they provide. By having a clearer understanding of a user group's expectations, archivists can be better prepared to meet those needs.

Research Questions

While the end results of historical archaeologists using archives are easily seen, the process used to access this documentary evidence remains unclear.

Major research questions.

1. How do historical archaeologists use archives to provide documentary evidence to support their archaeological research?
2. What is the typical experience of an historical archaeologist in an archive, and how can this knowledge aid in improving archival services?

Minor research questions.

1. What research processes do historical archaeologists use to find the information they are looking for?
2. Which resources do historical archaeologists find the most valuable?

Methodology

This study is based on the results of an exploratory online survey and an interview examining one archaeologist's archival use. An 18-question survey was made available online for four weeks during September 2008. Notice was sent via e-mail to a list of historical archaeology professors compiled from the Society for Historical Archaeology website as well as the HISTARCH listserv. An interview was also conducted with an historical archaeologist to examine how one particular researcher uses archives in conjunction with data from a dig site.

Limitations

Some limitations may come to light in this study. Most specifically, it is possible that historical archaeologists' use of archives differs in no way from other previously studied user groups. They are searching for historical documents just as historians and genealogists do. It is possible that the only difference amongst the user groups is simply in how they interpret the documents and write about them rather than how they go about discovering them.

There is the possibility that the user responses to the online survey will be considered too low to be statistically significant. The results may also have been impacted by the exclusion of respondents who waited too long to respond or did not find out about the survey until it had been closed. The survey was made available for four weeks; however, a few e-mails were received over the following weeks from archaeologists who had only then found out about the survey and were interested in participating.

Organization

This study will first present past and current literature that applies to the topic. The next section will be the methodology of the research performed followed by the results of the online survey. Finally, the conclusions based on both of these will be presented.

Chapter 2. Literature Review

The literature associated with historical archaeologists' use of archives is rather sparse. No studies written by archivists concerning this user group were found during the research for this study. Several studies dealing with other user groups' use of archives were discovered in several peer-reviewed archival journals. Writings by archaeologists themselves were few and far between. In general, they merely discussed the idea of using archival materials rather than the research process.

The major themes and issues of the archival literature discuss how researchers of the user groups studied (i.e., historians and genealogists) find the archival materials related to their research topic and how they access the materials or wish to access the materials. On the other hand, the themes and issues in the archaeological literature place more emphasis on the authenticity and bias of the documents than with the finding of them. Since it is possible that historical archaeologists have the same archival needs as other user groups conducting historical research, previous user studies of other archival user groups will give insight into this study's user group.

Examining the concerns historical archaeologists have relating to historical documents may give insight into what archivists can do to ease historical archaeologists' concerns about the documents' integrity of the materials. This literature review will first present published materials written by historical archaeologists. Following these materials will be an examination of different user group studies performed by archivists, with each user group having its own section.

Historical Archaeologists Write about Archives

In general, historical archaeologists write about the application of the documents found in archives to archaeological research. They do not delve into the research processes used to find documents, but instead discuss the documents themselves. The foundation of historical archaeology is the combination of artifacts and documents, yet there are no standardizations indicating how the two should be integrated.

Curiously, while virtually all historical archaeologists would agree that the integration of documentary and archaeological evidence is at the heart of historical archaeology, there are virtually no rules or conventions on how it should be done. In fact, there are few published treatments of the subject. (Barber, 1994, p. 42)

Overall, historical archaeologists place more emphasis on the importance of gleaning and understanding any biases that may be found in historical documents.

Bias in historical documents. Pitt (1972) warns that while “[fieldwork] is firsthand observation... in the historical record the perspective is through somebody else’s eyes (primary sources), and information may even be gathered by third and fourth hand (secondary sources)” (p. 46). Pitt goes on to say that this “subjectivity in historical documents” may be due to the writer of the document omitting or even distorting the facts of the events and peoples described in them (p. 49). A biased individual may have written the documents, or the documents may give an account of an event, but be written by someone who only heard rumors and did not actually witness it.

The only, albeit partial, solution to this problem is for the anthropologist or sociologist to absorb as much of the relevant literature as he can so that he knows, to some degree, the reporter’s frame of mind. For example, an anthropologist attempting to utilize mission records to any degree should read widely in the religious and social history of the period. (Pitt, 1972, p. 49)

By understanding the biases of the time period in which a document was written the researcher can attempt to mitigate the effects of bias on his/her research.

Galloway (2006b) agrees with Pitt (1972) saying, “historical sources of any kind cannot be unbiased, must always be partial, and are never representative of perfect recall of the facts” (p. 25). Galloway’s research mostly deals with the North American aboriginal groups. Many of the associated sites date prior to European contact, which does eventually occur at a later date. To handle this, Galloway describes the Direct Historical Approach.

In the United States the attempt at a solution to difficult problems of late prehistoric social evolution and culture change through the use of historical documents has been called the Direct Historical Approach. Its goal is to connect named Native tribes of the historic period with protohistoric and prehistoric archaeological remains, and this is generally held to be a simple matter of moving from the known to the unknown backward in time while moving at the same time from document to material artifact. (pp. 58-59)

The concern with these documents is the strong bias Europeans and Americans held against these aboriginal groups. This bias is prevalent even though the observers may have believed themselves to be observing objectively. As a result, Galloway insists that the archaeologist must see the documents as artifacts themselves. Consequently, the documents need to be seen as the end product of a process just as Cook (1992) and Schellenberg (1956) described. Galloway goes on to say that the archaeology will have to provide support for the evidence offered in the documents.

Thus the archaeologist who has access to such materials will have to work harder than if he had none. He will have to find structure and implication in material remains that match what he finds in the “subtext” of the documents before he can use them with confidence. And above all, he will have to do some anthropology on the Europeans before he can understand the narrative artifacts they left. These Europeans, after all, were not participant observers. They wrote stories with

themselves as the heroes and the Other as antagonist and background. They wrote stories for self-justification and glory; it was not necessary that they portray the places they went and the people they saw accurately – just that they do it convincingly. Unfortunately for archaeology, they succeeded. (Galloway, 2006b, p. 75-76)

In essence, Galloway is stressing that historical archaeologists continue to understand the point of view from which observations were written in order to take any biases into account.

Another form of bias can exist in historical documents when compared to archaeological sites. Archaeological sites are the culmination of time – layer is built upon layer. Documents give insight into a moment in time. Barber (1994) stresses

there are very real differences, however, between archaeological assemblages and probate inventories. First, an archaeological assemblage accumulates over a long time, while a probate inventory is taken at a particular moment in time.... Second, certain items that are prominent archaeologically are considered components of other items in probate inventories. (p. 33)

As items decompose, they break apart into their component parts, and the more time that passes, less of the original item is found. For example, a wooden box will break down into pieces of wood, metal hinges and nails until the point when the wood disappears completely. Historical archaeologists need to know how to match the pieces of things to the things listed in documents.

Other writings. Orser (1981) stressed that archaeology has a lot to gain from the use of historical documents as well as what he refers to as public history – the history retained in the memories of those who live near an archaeological site. “It should be clear that an historical archaeologist excavating a nineteenth-century fur trading post would greatly benefit from descriptions of post life by a trader living there in the 1820s”

(Orser, 1981, p. 77). However, not all historical sites have existing, related documentation. In the 28 years since Orser made his argument, public history has begun to find its way into archives as oral history projects, of which historical archaeologists may not be aware.

Archival Research

On Historians. There have been a few surveys examining how historians use archives in the last twenty years (Beattie, 1989-90; Duff, Craig, & Cherry, 2004b; Duff & Johnson, 2002; Tibbo, 2003). The main question in each of these studies asked how historians find the information they need. Beattie and Duff and Johnson presented general user studies of archives user groups, while Tibbo and Duff et al. specifically focused on how historians' searches are affected by the digital age.

Beattie's (1989-90) user study focused on historians researching women's history with the goal to discover their general opinion of archives and archival materials. Beattie used the combined methods of a questionnaire and a reference/citation analysis for the study. The responses indicated personal papers, records of women's organizations, and government records were important to researchers in this field. The top three ways researchers discovered information were using archivists for reference, citations found in other published works, and discussions with colleagues. The historians reported that their main complaint was a lack of materials relating specifically to women's history. "Until relatively recently, very little special effort has been made by archivists to acquire materials specifically on women" (Beattie, 1989-90, p. 38). As a result, Beattie

concluded that archivists could create subject-oriented finding aids to help historians with specific areas of focus.

Beattie's (1989-90) study focused on a subset of a user group. While it is important for minorities, such as women, to be more represented in archives, it weakens the study because the user group is already hampered purely by the nature of their research topic. Beattie's study also has a weakness in that it puts more weight towards the citation analysis while disregarding the answers given in the questionnaire. Beattie receives straightforward answers to her questionnaire, yet she puts too much focus on the fact that the historians are not citing the materials they claim to be using. There is the possibility that they are using the materials they are finding to lead them to the materials they then cite in their papers.

Duff and Johnson (2002) conducted interviews to examine the information-seeking behavior of historians in general. They discovered four types of behaviors related to the research process: "(1) orienting themselves to archives, finding aids, sources, or a collection; (2) seeking known material; (3) building contextual knowledge; and (4) identifying relevant material" (Duff & Johnson, 2002, p. 478-9). Duff and Johnson indicate that historians start their research asking broad questions. These questions change as the historian gathers more information.

Historians at the beginning of their research may, therefore, appear vague about their information needs. Their research methods seem haphazard and their discovery of relevant material, accidental. Our findings indicate, however, that historians are systematic and purposeful in the way they go about building context, which enables them to find and interpret relevant material. (Duff & Johnson, 2002, p. 494)

Duff and Johnson wrote that many of the historians would appreciate subject indexes and keyword searches to be made available by archives (p. 490). Instead, the historians relied on the archivist to point them in the right direction. “When there is little subject access, they collect names and consult the archivist for advice on which sources would be most useful for their research” (Duff & Johnson, 2002, p. 493). Historians also stressed the importance of finding aids and archivists to find information (Duff & Johnson, 2002, p. 493).

Duff and Johnson’s (2002) study is overly broad. The study’s aim is to look at historians’ information-seeking behavior in the new world of Internet connectivity. However, the responses and the discussion seem only to examine general information-seeking behavior with some questions added that pertain to the World Wide Web. This may be due to the amount of time that has passed since the study was conducted and the technological advances that have occurred since then, such as Web 2.0. The Internet is much more prevalent in people’s lives than it was even seven years ago.

Tibbo (2003) conducted a survey for the Primarily History project, which “[was] the first international, comparative study to examine historians’ information-seeking behaviors since the advent of the World Wide Web, electronic finding aids, digitized collections, and an increasingly pervasive networked scholarly environment” (p. 14). Tibbo’s specific focus was on how historians find collections in the era of online finding aids and digitized materials. The survey also focused on discovering how historians teach students to do research. The results indicate that when considering printed resources, most historians depend on citations and bibliographies to find information.

Considering electronic resources, most historians searched their own library's online catalog as well as other library catalogs and other repository websites (Tibbo, 2003).

Tibbo indicates that while historians continue to contact an archives before visiting, it is increasingly done through e-mail and telephone where it was once done through regular mail (p. 24-26). One of the surprising statistics was that only "4 of the 153 American historians said they knew they had used EAD finding aids. Sixty-one indicated that they were not sure, while eighty-two said they definitely had not" (Tibbo, 2003, p. 27). Tibbo concludes that the surest result from the survey is "that U.S. historians are using a wide array of primary resources and an equally wide array of methods to locate them, ranging all the way from the tried-and-true strategy of following leads in footnotes to searching the Web" (p. 28).

Tibbo's (2003) study is much more focused than Duff and Johnson (2002). However, the study garners so much information that Tibbo concludes that it raises more questions than it answers (p. 28). The study also suffers from the problem that it uses archival terminology while questioning historians. The survey asks historians if they have used EAD finding aids and more than half of the respondents say they have not. The question is raised of how many have used EAD-encoded finding aids without knowing that they were using one. Fortunately, Tibbo recognizes that this may be an issue.

Duff, Craig, and Cherry (2004b)¹ conducted a survey with the goal of finding the “promises and pitfalls of the digital age” (p. 7). The results indicated that finding aids and other archival resources were the most important to researchers. Duff et al. also inquired after barriers to researchers finding needed information with responses indicating geographical location as the biggest barrier and lack of a finding aid as the second biggest (p. 14). Other barriers included materials in fragile condition, difficult formats, and finding aids that were lacking in details. “Over two hundred respondents indicated that these barriers had slowed down their research and caused delays.... Some suggest that the lack of good or detailed finding aids resulted in time wasted sifting through material not relevant to their topic” (Duff et al., 2004b, p. 15). Some of the other findings revealed that researchers prefer original documents to reproductions and they like having a personal copy of finding aids. The majority also valued getting copies of the sources they will be using so they can reference them at a later date (Duff et al., 2004b, p. 21). Duff et al. concluded that the influence of the digital age on archives (i.e., finding aids being encoded and made available online as well as archivists being available via e-mail) can go a long way to aiding historical researchers locate the materials they seek (p. 22). Overall, Duff et al. was a solidly conducted and presented study.

On Genealogists. Duff and Johnson (2003) presented the first user study focused exclusively on genealogists’ use of archives. The study involved in-depth interviews

¹ Duff, Craig, and Cherry (2004a) took the data from the same survey as Duff, Craig, and Cherry (2004b) and examined only the data from historians researching topics relating to Canadian history.

with ten genealogists, eight of which were professionals, with the aim to discover how they perform their research and what barriers they tend to encounter. The crux of genealogy research is the names of specific people. Therefore, all the genealogists in the study “wanted lists of names, or names indexes, or search engines that retrieved by name to facilitate their research” (Duff & Johnson, 2003, p. 85). Because archival organization is not usually presented in that fashion, genealogists must approach the information from a different angle. “Without access by name, genealogists must transform their request for information about a person to a request for particular types of records created in a specific location during a certain time period” (Duff & Johnson, 2003, p. 85).

One of the most important concepts that Duff and Johnson (2003) gained from the interviews was that the genealogists developed a search expertise over time.

After many years of research they had become experts on the records that contained genealogical information, and all participants provided examples of linking specific data to particular forms of records. They knew the records that facilitated access to information about people and the ones that contained name indexes. With this knowledge they were able to circumvent the archival retrieval system and directly access relevant records. (Duff & Johnson, 2003, p. 88)

The genealogists found a way to work around the archival systems that frustrated them, even going to the point of creating their own finding aids that focused on names and people rather than provenance, which is the standard format in archives (Duff & Johnson, 2003, p. 92).

Duff and Johnson’s (2003) study interviewed ten genealogists. While it remains slightly unclear, the genealogists appear to have been selected from a couple of restricted geographic locations. The majority of the ten interviewed were also professionals.

While this meant that they have more experience searching for information in archives, it

also meant that they have different purposes and restrictions than hobbyist genealogists, such as billable hours. While it was interesting to hear about specific instances of archival research, it does not give an overall picture of the general user group's experiences.

Conclusion

Historical archaeologists are writing about using archival materials. However, their concentration and focus is primarily on how to interpret the materials rather than how to go about finding them. With historical archaeologists not addressing the research process, it falls to archivists to discover what processes are being used and assist in streamlining them.

In recent years, archivists have conducted several studies examining researchers who use archival collections. These studies have shown that historians look to archives to provide them the broad basis of history only to be disappointed that archives have not kept the materials that reveal all human interactions. Genealogists want list of names and places and relations between the two as well as subject listings, but there is no foundation for these in how archivists organize and describe collections.

These studies have been limited in terms of the user groups addressed, focusing solely on historians and genealogists. This thesis adds to the literature on archival user groups by examining the previously unstudied user group of historical archaeologists. While historical archaeologists may or may not differ from the other user groups, any new knowledge gained can help archivists to structure their services in such a way as to assist any researcher seeking information.

Chapter 3. Methodology

This study was conducted using mixed methodology research (MMR), which is a combination of quantitative data and qualitative data. Fidel (2008) indicates that “the development of the main method in a study can be supported by applying another method” (p. 266). For this study, an interview (qualitative) is used to support survey data (quantitative), the idea being that the results will be more complete with the two sets of data together than either would be on its own. “Generally speaking, using MMR allows researchers to address issues more widely and more completely than one method could, which in turn amplifies the richness and complexity of the research findings” (Fidel, 2008, p. 266). The general responses of the survey will be enriched by the specific information gathered in the interview. It is hoped that using two different methods will “create new insights and possibilities that one method alone could not produce” (Fidel, 2008, p. 267).

The mixed methods used in this study consist of a survey of historical archaeologists for exploratory research purposes as well as a brief interview examining a particular instance of historical archaeological archival research. A survey was determined to be the best method to gather information because it allows for the collecting of general opinions from numerous members of the user group to discover if there are any trends in their archival experiences. The interview allows for focus on one particular historical archaeologist’s personal experiences while conducting archival research. It is hoped that together these two research methods will give insight into the processes historical archaeologists use when accessing archival materials.

Survey

The original structure of the survey was based upon the survey questions found in Tibbo (2003), Duff and Johnson (2002), and Duff, Craig, and Cherry (2004b). These previous studies provided the framework for the types of questions that address archival users' practices. Questions of particular interest included those dealing with lists of archival materials users may utilize and those asking users to rate certain aspects of archives. A list of questions was then created concerning items of interest related to historical archaeologists. These included questions addressing areas of archaeological research and when archival research is done in relation to archaeological field work. Questions relating to general demographics were also added.

The main focus of the questions was to gain an understanding of historical archaeologists' experiences in archives. The purpose was to get a sense of how historical archaeologists' find the information they are seeking, what that information is, and what their typical archival experience is like. Several of the survey questions were written to discover what historical archaeologists are looking for as well as how they begin to go about looking for it. Do they perform archival research before going out in the field? How important are archives during the different stages of field work? Do they prepare for a visit to an archives and how? When they are at the archives, are their needs met? The survey is also aimed at discovering what the general experience of a historical archaeologist in an archive is because archival staff can influence users as greatly as the materials can. A full list of the survey questions is provided in Appendix A.

Once the basic list of questions was assembled, it was first reviewed by the author's advisor, then by the thesis committee as a whole. Questions were rewritten for clarification where needed. The answer options for some questions were amended to apply more appropriately to the user group. For example, the question dealing with degree level had an option added to it for respondents with a certificate in Cultural Resources Management rather than a degree in archaeology. The majority of changes were with wording to ensure respondents would understand exactly what each question was asking. When the questions met the entire committee's approval it was submitted for approval by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at San Jose State University. IRB approval was received on August 12, 2008.

The decision had been made to conduct the survey online in the consideration of time constraints and to garner more responses than may be acquired if respondents were required to mail back the completed form. Surveymonkey.com (<http://surveymonkey.com>) was selected to distribute the survey because of its easy-to-use user interface for both the survey creator and the survey respondents. Surveymonkey.com allowed for the questions to be structured in several different ways, for example, questions requiring just one answer, questions allowing several answers, questions rating statements on a scale of 1-5, and text answers. The survey was encrypted to ensure the security of the responses. Once the survey questions were entered into the system and formatted correctly, Surveymonkey.com created a URL for accessing the survey. All respondents used this single URL to make the survey anonymous.

The decision was made to focus on getting survey responses from mostly United States historical archaeologists. To this end, a list of archaeologists currently teaching at United States universities with a professional interest in historical archaeology was compiled based on information from the Society for Historical Archaeology² website (<http://www.sha.org/>). All academic ranks (i.e., associate, assistant, and full professors) were targeted. Because the Society for Historical Archaeology's website only lists members' university affiliations, potential participants' e-mail addresses were obtained through the university websites. The list was modified in cases where faculty were no longer employed by the university or interests listed in biographies did not indicate a specialization in historical archaeology. E-mails with a description of this study and the SurveyMonkey.com URL were sent in small batches to increase the chances that the e-mails would get to the intended recipients. Only a few of the e-mails bounced back with Mailer-Daemon e-mails. A few e-mail recipients responded indicating that historical archaeology was not their field; they were thanked for their time and asked to pass the survey URL along to any colleagues they thought may be interested in participating.

In an effort to get the survey out to a larger base of historical archaeologists, including those who are actually conducting field research, the e-mail describing this study and the survey URL were also sent to the HISTARCH listserv (<https://lists.asu.edu/cgi-bin/wa?A0=HISTARCH>), which is an e-mail list hosted by Arizona State University for discussion of historical archaeology by professionals and others interested in the field.

² The Society for Historical Archaeology is an association based in the United States.

Participation in the survey was on a voluntary basis. Respondents were allowed to drop out at any time. Confidentiality and security of the responses were ensured using the Surveymonkey.com interface.

Interview

An interview was conducted to get a single historical archaeologist's description of his archival experience and how it complements his archaeological work. The purpose was to obtain a more in-depth, personal account than could be gotten from the survey questions. The interview format also allowed for follow-up questions based on responses from the interviewee.

The historical archaeologist selected for the interview to complement this study was Dr. Thomas Layton. The interview focused on Dr. Layton's archival research related to the *Frolic*, a Baltimore clipper that was used as an opium runner in China and was shipwrecked off the California coast near Mendocino (Layton, 1997; T. Layton, personal communication, October 3, 2008). The 80-minute interview was conducted in Dr. Layton's dining room on October 3, 2008. A recording was made at the interview and transcribed by a transcription service at a later date.

The interview was informal in format. Basic questions were asked to get Dr. Layton to speak to the topic, but his responses were allowed to take their own direction. Questions asked during the interview included the following:

1. What is your process of how you begin looking for archival materials?
2. What are your actual archival experiences, good or bad?
3. How do you see artifacts and text interacting?

It was hoped that these questions would lead Dr. Layton to speak freely of his process and his experiences.

Data Input and Analysis

The data from the survey was downloaded from SurveyMonkey.com into an Excel spreadsheet, which was then used to input the data into SPSS. SPSS version 17 was used to create tabulated tables of the general data gathered from the survey as well as graphs illustrating the responses. It was also used to get a sense of trends indicated in the data as a whole. Some issues did arise with software versions as well as a general understanding of how the statistical software worked. Because of this, some tables and graphs were created with basic math and Excel.

Limitations

It is highly possible that the survey will reveal nothing new or different about the studied user group's archival research methods when compared to previously studied groups. Historical archaeologists may be searching for materials in the same manner as historians and/or genealogists and merely applying the information they find in a different way.

Another limitation of the survey results may be due to the short length of time the questions were made available online. A few interested parties contacted the author after the closing date of the survey expressing a wish to participate. These parties were thanked for their time and interest and informed that the research phase of the study had been completed. With the survey only available for 4 weeks, 99 respondents began the

survey, and 87 completed it.³ This may result in too few responses to be considered statistically significant.

It has been noted that the question related to Degree Levels may not have been worded correctly. Some respondents picked one response, presumably the highest level of education received. Other respondents chose every level up to the highest. There was also the problem that CRM was included as an option, which is not a degree itself. A couple of respondents also chose to enter a selection that was not considered – ABD.

In addition, there was one question in the survey that was entered incorrectly into the Surveymonkey.com interface.⁴ It was created as a question that only allowed for a single answer, when it should have allowed for multiple choices. The author received a few e-mails from survey respondents informing her that they had wished to select more than one choice and had been unable to do so. Some of the respondents used the “Other” text field to indicate their multiple choices. It is uncertain how this error affected the overall response to this question.

³ Twelve respondents stopped answering questions at various points in the survey. These numbers were provided by Surveymonkey.com.

⁴ Question #6 – Where do you locate documentary evidence?

Chapter 4. Results

Survey

The survey questions were made available online for four weeks beginning September 2, 2008. The response to the survey was better than expected with 99 respondents beginning the survey and 87 respondents completing the survey.

Demographics. Basic demographic information was collected – gender, age group, and degree level. Gender was split almost evenly with males at 46.5% and females at 52.5%. There was one respondent who selected the “Decline to state” option.

Figure 1. *Distribution of gender of respondents*

None of the respondents chose the option for the age group 18-24. The 25-34 age group was the largest group at 29.3%. The 35-44 age group represented 23.2% of the respondents. The 45-54 age group represented 20.2% of the respondents, and the 55-64

age group represented 19.2%. There were 5 respondents from the 65-74 age group. Surprisingly, three respondents selected “75 and above.”

Figure 2. *Distribution of ages of respondents*

Question 3, which inquired about degree level, was discovered to have problems during the analysis phase of this study. The question allowed for multiple responses due to the presence of an option that was not a degree and that could apply at the same time as a degree. The intention behind the question was to have respondents choose the single level that best matched with the option to possibly select the “CRM” option or the “Other” option as well. Some respondents selected one option, while other respondents selected all levels that applied. The “CRM” option should have been asked as a separate question. Respondents should have been instructed to select the single, most appropriate degree level. Table 1 shows the response frequencies of each option.

Table 1. *Select the option that best represents your degree level (please select all that apply)*

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid BA/BS	25	20.2	20.2	20.2
MA/MS	47	37.9	37.9	58.1
PhD	36	29.0	29.0	87.1
CRM	5	4.0	4.0	91.1
No degree	2	1.6	1.6	92.7
Other	9	7.3	7.3	100.0
Total	124	100.0	100.0	

The text responses to the “Other” option can be seen in Appendix B.

Research Time Span and Focus. Question 4 queried respondents about research time span and was focused on discovering how long respondents had been performing research in historical archaeology. Over 60% of respondents indicated they have been doing research in the field for more than 10 years. Only one respondent indicated that s/he had been performing historical archaeology for 1-2 years. No respondents selected the option for “Less than one year.”

Question 5 aimed to discover the geographic regions and time periods of respondents’ archaeological and archival research. The majority of respondents indicated areas of the United States. The main time period studied by of the majority of respondents was the 17th to 19th centuries. Full text responses to this question can be seen in Appendix B.

Figure 3. *Distribution of historical archaeology research time span of respondents*

Archives Access. The section of questions focusing on archives access aimed to discover how long respondents had been using archives as part of their research, what facilities they are using, how they are finding the repositories and archival materials, and how they go about accessing an archives and its collection.

Question 6 was problematic in that respondents were unable to select as many of the options as they wished, and there was no “All of the above” option to cover all contingencies. The author received e-mails from a few respondents who had difficulty answering the question due to its format early in the survey time period. However, it was decided to leave the question in the incorrect format so all responses would be to the same question, in the same format. Figure 4 shows a large response to the “Other” option, which the majority of respondents (57.9%) used to indicate that they use all the listed facilities. Not considering the “Other” option, 17.9% responded that archives are

where historical archaeologists find documentary evidence while 12.6% responded with libraries. The full text responses can be seen in Appendix B.

Figure 4. *Distribution of responses indicating where respondents find documents*

Question 7 was aimed at discovering how long respondents had been using archives as part of their research. Over 50% of respondents indicated that they have been using archives for “More than 10 years.” Only one respondent selected the option for “Less than 1 year,” and 4 respondents selected the option for “1-2 years.”

Figure 5. *Distribution of archival research time span of respondents*

Question 8 sought to discover when the respondents had last visited an archives. Seven of the respondents visited an archives the day before filling out the survey. Eighteen of the respondents visited an archives sometime in the week prior to filling out the survey. None of the respondents selected the option for “More than 5 years ago.” The majority of respondents (43.6%) had visited an archives sometime within the last month before answering the survey question.

Figure 6. *Distribution of responses indicating when respondents last visited an archives*

Question 9 was designed to determine how historical archaeologists went about discovering which repositories and collections may contain the information they seek. The most popular choices included, in order of popularity, “Online Archival Documents (e.g., finding aids)” at 17.7%, “Web Searches” at 16.7%, “Librarians/Archivists” at 16.7%, and “Citations/Footnotes” at 15.7%. None of the options went unselected. One respondent indicated that “luck” guides him/her, while yet another respondent claimed to rely on “past experience” to find information. The full text of all “Other” responses can be found in Appendix B.

Table 2. *How do you discover which repositories contain the information you are seeking?*

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Students	14	3.5	3.5	3.5
	Colleagues	55	13.7	13.9	17.4
	Librarians/Archivists	66	16.4	16.7	34.1
	Catalogs	47	11.7	11.9	46.0
	Online Archival Documents (e.g., finding aids)	70	17.4	17.7	63.6
	Citations/Footnotes	62	15.4	15.7	79.3
	Web Searches	66	16.4	16.7	96.0
	Other	16	4.0	4.0	100.0
	Total	396	98.5	100.0	
Missing	System	6	1.5		
	Total	402	100.0		

Question 10, which sought to discover how historical archaeologists prefer to actually access the documents they need, had the most interesting responses. Over 30% indicated that they prefer to travel to the archives to see the materials in person. Not surprisingly, 41.9% indicated they prefer digital copies of the materials compared to only 16.1% wanting physical copies. One respondent did mention, “often travel is not

possible due to funding, but physical AND digital copies are best.” The full text of all “Other” responses can be seen in Appendix B.

Figure 7. *Distribution of responses indicating how respondents prefer to access the materials*

Question 11 simply asked if the respondents performed archival research before beginning field work. Ninety of the 93 respondents to this question said, “Yes,” and only 3 said, “No.” Question 12 then attempted to determine how important archives are to historical archaeologists during the whole research process. The responses to this question indicated that while archives are very important during the phases before and after field work, it is less important during field work.

Figure 8. *Distribution of responses indicating importance of archival research before field work*

Figure 9. *Distribution of responses indicating importance of archival research during field work*

Figure 10. *Distribution of responses indicating importance of archival research after field work*

Archival Experience. Question 13 focused on what historical archaeologists do before going to an archives. The main goal of this question was to determine how much preparation historical archaeologists do before their archival visit. Do they arrange for the visit beforehand? Do they discuss their research with archivists? Do they research possible materials before the visit? The responses to the first part made it appear that the respondents are contacting archives before visiting, but some may not consider it as important as others. The responses to the second part of the question definitely indicated that the respondents inform the archival staff of their research topics. The third part of the question indicated that the respondents are attempting to discover information about materials before their visit, but due to the way the question was worded it is not entirely

clear if the respondents are doing this by speaking with archival staff or if they are doing searching of some sort on their own.

Figure 11. *Distribution of responses regarding pre-archival visit communication*

Figure 12. *Distribution of responses regarding pre-archival visit communication*

Figure 13. *Distribution of responses regarding pre-archival visit communication*

The purpose of question 14 was to discover how historical archaeologists felt about their typical archival experience. Do they receive enough attention from archival staff? Are the items they request delivered in a reasonable time frame? Are copies an acceptable price? Is adequate space provided for doing research? Are they provided with supplies such as paper, pencils, and gloves? Are they able to find needed items without difficulty?

The responses to the first part of the question indicated that the majority of respondents feel that the archival staff generally meets their needs. However, 8 respondents indicated that they disagreed with the statement “I feel I receive the appropriate amount of aid from archival staff.” None of the respondents selected the “Strongly Disagree” option.

Figure 14. *Distribution of responses regarding archival experience*

The responses to the second part of question 14 indicated that the majority (63.7%) felt their requested items are delivered in an acceptable time frame. Due to the way this question was worded, it is uncertain if respondents meant for their answer to apply to materials brought to them while they are at the archives or copies of items sent to them via mail or e-mail.

The third part of the question addressing the cost of copies in an archives got a mixed response. The largest group of respondents (42.6%) selected “Agree” for the statement “Copies of requested items have a reasonable cost.” However, 25.3% chose the “Disagree” option. Unfortunately, it is uncertain if this applies only to materials copied onsite, or if respondents also applied copying costs of mailed materials. It is also uncertain what many archives charge for copying services.

Figure 15. *Distribution of responses regarding archival experience*

Figure 16. *Distribution of responses regarding archival experience*

The fourth part of question 14 aimed to discover if historical archaeologists felt researcher space available at archives adequately met their needs. The responses indicated that the majority (61.5%) agree that space needs are met. None of the respondents selected the “Strongly Disagree” option, and only 6 respondents selected the “Disagree” option.

Figure 17. *Distribution of responses regarding archival experience*

The fifth part of the question aimed to discover if historical archaeologists felt adequately supplied with needed supplies for performing archival research. Because archives restrict what you can bring with you while doing research due to security and preservation issues, many archival facilities will provide researchers with paper, pencils, and gloves. The majority of respondents (51.6%) to this part of the question agreed that their supply needs were being met. Another large portion of the respondents (25.3%) indicated that they neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement “My supplies needs

(e.g., pencils, paper, gloves, etc.) are met.” This may indicate that these respondents do not feel this is an issue when doing archival research.

Figure 18. *Distribution of responses regarding archival experience*

The sixth, and last, part of question 14 stated “Finding needed items is not difficult.” From the majority of the responses received (“Agree” 42.9%, “Neither Agree nor Disagree” 29.7, and “Disagree” 23.1%), it is apparent that the statement was worded ambiguously. The question was meant to inquire after finding archival materials, but could have been taken to mean things like the supplies mentioned in part 5 of the question. It could also be taken to mean locating which archival facilities have the needed materials. This vague question received vague responses.

Figure 19. *Distribution of responses regarding archival experience*

Question 15 asked, “What other services do you seek from archives?” This was to discover if there were services historical archaeologists wanted from archives but had not been thought of or considered during the creation of the survey. Are there any unknown requests from the user group? Several of the respondents to this optional question indicated that digital copies of photographs and maps would be very helpful. Surprisingly, one service requested in several responses was more finding aids online; one respondent even expressed interest in a nation-wide online union database of archives’ finding aids. The majority of responses seemed focused on accessing information about collections and the materials online, copyright permissions, and being able to get information about where other collections may be found. The full text of these responses can be seen in Appendix B.

Research. Question 16 shifted the focus to what types of materials historical archaeologists may be looking for in archives. The basic list was created based on lists from the user group surveys examining historians. The thesis committee added the options for “City plats” and “Sanborn insurance records” after review.

Table 3. *What types of primary documentation have you found to be useful to your research? (Please select all that apply.)*

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Newspapers	79	10.8	10.9	10.9
	Personal diaries	68	9.3	9.4	20.3
	Business papers	60	8.2	8.3	28.6
	Maps	90	12.3	12.4	41.0
	Wills	59	8.1	8.1	49.2
	Probate records	61	8.3	8.4	57.6
	Photographs	82	11.2	11.3	68.9
	Organization records	46	6.3	6.4	75.3
	City plats	65	8.9	9.0	84.3
	Sanborn insurance records	69	9.4	9.5	93.8
	Other	45	6.1	6.2	100.0
	Total	724	98.9	100.0	
Missing	System	8	1.1		
	Total	732	100.0		

The “Other” option garnered a large variety of materials that had not been considered when creating the survey. A selection of responses to the “Other” option included government records, deeds, census records, magazines, oral histories, correspondence, and ledgers. The list included practically any type of item an archive may preserve. The full text of all the “Other” option responses can be seen in Appendix B.

Question 17 sought to determine how important historical archaeologists consider archivists, print finding aids, online finding aids, and online union databases of finding aids when looking for information. The responses to the first part of this question indicated that historical archaeologists consider archivists important to their research with “Strongly Agree” at 42.9% and “Agree” at 41.8%. Thirteen respondents chose “Neither Agree nor Disagree,” while only one respondent chose “Disagree.”

Figure 20. *Distribution of responses indicating importance of archivists*

The second part of question 17 focused on print finding aids available onsite at the archives. The respondents indicated that print finding aids are important to their research with 45.1% selecting “Strongly Agree” and 46.2% selecting “Agree.” Seven respondents chose “Neither Agree nor Disagree,” while only one respondent chose “Disagree.”

Figure 21. *Distribution of responses indicating importance of print finding aids*

The responses to the third part of question 17 showed a greater preference for online finding aids than print finding aids. The majority of respondents (64.8%) selected “Strongly Agree” for the statement “Finding Aids or other archival indexing documents available on the archives website,” and 24.2% selected “Agree.” Nine respondents chose “Neither Agree nor Disagree” while only one respondent chose “Disagree.”

Figure 22. *Distribution of responses indicating importance of online finding aids*

The fourth part of question 17 concerned finding aids found in online union databases such as the Online Archive of California. The responses to this part were scattered. While 38.5 % strongly agreed and 23.1% agreed that they are helpful in doing research, 26.4% of the respondents selected “Neither Agree nor Disagree.” More importantly, 11% selected the “N/A” option, which can only be taken as meaning that they are unfamiliar with online union databases or that there are no union databases for their area. One respondent chose the “Strongly Disagree” option.

Figure 23. *Distribution of responses indicating importance of online finding aids union databases*

Comments. The final question of the survey simply asked for suggestions of general improvements archives could make to assist historical archaeologists in their research. The majority of responses asked for more online access to finding aids and materials. One comment stressed that “this is the Digital Age” suggesting that many researchers expect to find ever growing amounts of information online. Several comments asked that archives have more staff, be it for interactions or processing collections faster. The overall impression from the comments was that historical archaeologists would like to use Web searches to find which repositories have the materials they are searching for, as well as be able to access some, if not all, of the materials online. The full text of all responses to question 18 can be seen in Appendix B.

Interview

Dr. Thomas Layton taught archaeology at San Jose State University until a couple years ago when he retired to focus on his writing. The author took two classes in historical archaeology from Dr. Layton during his tenure. During those classes, coursework included transcribing business correspondence from Augustine Heard & Co.'s Canton branch, which dealt in the opium trade. Thus, the author was familiar with Dr. Layton's research regarding the *Frolic* shipwreck off the coast of Mendocino, California.

In 1984, Dr. Layton discovered flakes of Chinese pottery at a Pomo Indian site in Northern California called Three Chop Village (Layton, 1997). These flakes indicated that Chinese pottery had been turned into arrowheads, but where had it come from? Soon Dr. Layton realized that the pottery shards came from a shipwreck (T. Layton, personal communication, October 3, 2008). He set out to date the shipwreck so that he could date Three Chop Village as well as any future sites where the Chinese pottery may be found. Dr. Layton's interest in the Chinese pottery led him to wreck divers who had salvaged other materials from the *Frolic*. His find also attracted the attention of other historians and archaeologists with interests in Chinese pottery because he had found specific pottery patterns with a specific date – that of the *Frolic* shipwreck (T. Layton, personal communication, October 3, 2008).

Dr. Layton has been working on documenting the cultural context of the *Frolic* shipwreck for the last 25 years. His first book on the wreck discussed the American opium trade in China. His second book discussed the actual cargo of the *Frolic* on her

last voyage to San Francisco in 1850. He is now working on a third book focusing on the relationships of the American traders with Chinese women in Canton. He has pursued these lines of inquiry because he sees archaeology as part of a greater whole. “There’s an obligation, also, for modern archaeologists, to place... artifacts back into a cultural system” (T. Layton, personal communication, October 3, 2008). Archaeologists take objects found in the dirt and connect them to world systems.

In moving from simple flakes of Chinese pottery found in the dirt in Northern California to the Chinese opium trade after the Opium War, Dr. Layton has utilized numerous archival collections to delve into the lives of the people involved. Knowing that he has used archives extensively, as well as the author’s own experience with archival documents relating to the *Frolic* research, made Dr. Layton a good candidate for interviewing as part of the exploratory research of this thesis.

Dr. Layton was interviewed on October 3, 2008. The interview lasted for approximately 80 minutes. Dr. Layton was asked about his process when he begins looking for archival materials. He was also asked about actual archival experiences, good and bad. The interview was wrapped up by asking Dr. Layton how he saw artifacts and text interacting.

A good portion of the interview dealt with Dr. Layton’s research process. He began at the beginning – finding the Chinese pottery in the Pomo Indian settlement in Jackson State Forest at Three Chop Ridge (T. Layton, personal communication, October 3, 2008). Dr. Layton discussed the research he had done for his previous two books. This included how he visualizes the people he is following and writing about in the

scenes of history. This is especially important in his vignette writings, in which he attempts to get into the heads of the people he is studying through the use of letters and newspapers. It was especially interesting to hear of his latest work, which uses letters between George Dixwell, who worked for Augustine Heard & Co. in Canton, and his aunt in Boston. Dr. Layton discussed how he used the correspondence he found in the Massachusetts Historical Society in tandem with newspaper accounts of the times from both Boston and Canton (T. Layton, personal communication, October 3, 2008).

Dr. Layton also discussed his personal experiences in dealing with archivists and archival materials. Having dealt with collections in several different repositories, his experiences ran the gamut of good and bad – archivists who took him under their wing, discussing not only the collection, but the whole archives, as well as archivists who tried to impede his research (T. Layton, personal communication, October 3, 2008). He found archivists who knew their collections and were willing to aid serious researchers to be the most helpful. Those who saw it as their duty as the archivists of exclusive collections to obfuscate the materials hampered his work.

When discussing artifact and text interaction, Dr. Layton focused most upon the idea that a good historical archaeologist is first a good anthropologist. This is because he saw anthropologists as being trained to examine cultural context.

We see almost everything we look at in terms of its relationship to many other things and for the archaeologist to do good archaeology... you have to get beyond that [which is] strictly archaeological... It just happens that your initial kick for your research is a piece of material culture retrieved from a geographical context, but after that it's all anthropology [spelt] large... First, you're an anthropologist, and you're using archaeological techniques... (T. Layton, personal communication, October 3, 2008)

Anthropologists are trained to examine a multitude of inputs in cultural systems – economics, history, psychology, etc. It is this broad view that separates historical archaeologists from historians.

Chapter 5. Conclusions

Historical archaeologists' research comes from a different vantage point than historians and genealogists. Beaudry (1988) indicated that historical archaeologists "must develop an approach towards documentary analysis that is uniquely their own" separate from historians and prehistoric archaeologists (p. 1). Dr. Layton stressed "archaeology itself allows you to see things from a different perspective than other people because you find the artifact at a particular place. So initially, your view is from that remote place" (T. Layton, personal communication, October 3, 2008). Because of this different perspective, this study set out to discover if historical archaeologists' archival needs differed from any of the previously studied user groups.

Discussion

This study was fortunate to get responses from historical archaeologists who have been using archives as part of their research for some time; the majority of respondents have been using archives for more than 10 years. It was also good that the majority of respondents had visited an archive during the month prior to filling out the survey. This meant that the respondents were familiar with archival research and had a recent experience in an archives.

Unfortunately, due to the error made when entering question 6 (Where do you locate documentary evidence?) into the SurveyMonkey.com interface the results are skewed. While many respondents selected the "Other" option and wrote in "All of the above," it is not clear how many of the respondents who only selected one option wished to select more. The one thing this question does reveal is that historical archaeologists

are using a variety of facilities for their research. They are willing to go wherever the materials they need are found.

The four main ways historical archaeologists discover which repositories have the information they want are “Online Archival Documents (e.g., finding aids),” “Librarians/Archivists,” “Citations/Footnotes,” and “Web Searches.” Seventy-five percent of the respondents use online finding aids. Seventy-one percent of the respondents use librarians and archivists as well as Web searches. Sixty-six percent use citations and footnotes to find the repositories they want. These numbers support the strong drive to search the Internet for archival materials. Dr. Layton also stressed the importance of using the Internet to find collections of interest.

Well, I think what’s happening now in the last five, ten years is that archives [are placing their holdings] on the Web... so that you can do an online search, and that’s a biggie. Because how do you know that there’s something in a little archive at Cherry Hill or a little archive somewhere else? You don’t know. It’s very hit or miss, or lots of telephoning. But, to do that initial search with a search engine and get to find the archive because you’re searching the name Dixwell...⁵ and [to see that] the Massachusetts Historical Society [has] the whole Wigglesworth collection box-by-box [on their webpage]... So I can look at that and say hmm, there’s Dixwell stuff from 1840s in this box and contact the archivist. So, that is the biggest breakthrough. (T. Layton, personal communication, October 3, 2008)

Archives’ collections listed online, even at a basic level, are findable by a simple Web search.

Historical archaeologists extend their desire for computerized access to the archival materials themselves. A preference for digital copies of archival materials was

⁵ George Dixwell worked for Augustine Heard & Co., which owned the *Frolic*, in Canton, China organizing the company’s opium trade (Layton, 1997).

indicated by 41.9% of the respondents. However, 36.6% prefer to see the items in person at the archives. Historical archaeologists like to find what they want online and either access digital copies immediately or at least be able to obtain digital copies through e-mail.

The great majority of historical archaeologists do archival research before performing field work. Archival materials are very important before and after field work, with some historical archaeologists indicating an importance for them during the field work process. It was interesting to discover that archival research was considered so important before any dirt is moved. Archival materials are part of the whole planning process rather than just being a resource after the fact.

When looking for materials, historical archaeologists find archivists, print finding aids at an archives, and finding aids online at the archives' website to all be very helpful. It is unclear how helpful online union databases of finding aids may be as the responses were vague. This may be because there are not many online union databases of finding aids available and those that are online tend to be regionally based. One respondent did suggest that "Consolidation of records into one holding repository" would be the most helpful for finding needed materials. It appears that historical archaeologists may not be familiar with OCLC and NUMUC, both of which serve as a national union database for archival collections.

Historical archaeologists find possible collections online, and then speak with the archivists to determine if it may be what they are looking for. Dr. Layton indicated that he considers archivists to be a great help in locating pertinent materials in a collection

discovered via the web. According to Dr. Layton, archivists are helpful when they know what the researcher wants and that s/he is conducting serious research.

And ultimately, you probably have to talk with the archivist there and say... "What do you really have in this box that's correspondence from China?" or whatever it may be. And archivists, I've found, for the most part, have been helpful, always protective of their materials, certainly, but helpful. Particularly, if I tell them how I want to use it, and they realize that I'm a serious person. (T. Layton, personal communication, October 3, 2008)

Respondents also indicated that they are appreciative of archivists that are familiar with their collections.

Historical archaeologists appear to be arranging for their visits to archives beforehand. They speak with archives staff about the materials in which they are interested, and they attempt to get information about particular archival materials before the visit. Historical archaeologists are certainly interested in making their visit go smoothly by being well prepared through online research as indicated by this response to question 18:

Archives in general are doing an excellent job at gradually making more and more sources available online. While such information in the long run never truly replaces a personal visit, it makes pre-visit preparation easier and visits more productive.

This is mostly done to ensure that the time and cost of the visit is not wasted. Historical archaeologists can ensure that the visit will be worthwhile by verifying beforehand that the information they need is at the repository. This is also the reason historical archaeologists stressed the importance on online finding aids. When asked, "What other services do you seek from archives?" the majority of respondents want more access to

digitally scanned materials, specifically photographs and maps. Several respondents even indicated that they would like more online finding aids as well.

When it comes to the types of materials that historical archaeologists are searching for and accessing, the list seems endless. If an archives collects it, historical archaeologists may find a use for it. Any manner of materials could reveal something about how an artifact was made or used, placing it in context. According to Dr. Layton,

The intellectual stuff is to take [an] artifact from [the] archaeological context and place it into the cultural context [in which] it once played a part. And, there you have to learn a great deal about the 19th century; you have to learn about where it was produced; how it was manufactured; how it got to the location where it was sold; how it got from that location to a consumer; how it went through various stages of use and reuse until it got into the ground. (T. Layton, personal communication, October 3, 2008)

This is also in keeping with Cook's (1992) top-down appraisal theory – that everything fits into the broader context of the society in which it was created.

Overall, historical archaeologists seem happy with their typical archival experiences. The majority of respondents agreed that they receive an appropriate amount of aid from archives staff and that their requested materials arrive in a acceptable amount of time. They also generally agree that their space and supplies needs are met. While 42.6% of respondents felt that copies of items have a reasonable cost, 25.3% disagreed. It is uncertain if these responses apply to items copied while at the archives or items that are requested through means other than in person. The responses to the statement “Finding needed items is not difficult” seem to indicate that the question was ambiguously worded.

Dr. Layton indicated that his best archival experience was with an archivist who showed him around the entire collection, not just the parts of interest to his research. “Not only did he take me through the collections to see what I wanted to but [he] took me through the collections to see other things that were there. He set out to educate me” (T. Layton, personal communication, October 3, 2008). This is in keeping with Duff and Johnson (2003), who cited a genealogists’ desire to know more about how the entire archive was organized in order to discover if there were materials s/he was missing and to better know how to request materials (p. 89).

The responses to the question “What general improvements could archives make to assist you in your research?” had several general trends. There were requests for more digitized materials to be made available online, with some respondents just asking that everything be put online. Some requested longer hours so that researchers can get more work done in the short time they have. Keyword searches were mentioned several times with the indication that current searches using repositories’ websites were inadequate. There were a few comments expressing understanding limits on staff time, which affects archival staff’s ability to aid researchers or cause collections to sit in boxes uncataloged. One respondent indicated that some sort of introductory training to archival procedures would be helpful.

Recommendations

Overall, the responses to the survey indicate that historical archaeologists as a user group are not all that different from previously studied user groups of historians and genealogists. Historical archaeologists want easier access to archival collections. They

want keyword searches and subject access, just as genealogists want name and place indexes. They want digital copies of requested materials. They want to be able to find the materials they need before spending time and money to travel to the archives.

When it comes to collection development, archivists should consider Terry Cook's (1992) theories that the documents being considered for inclusion in an archives were created as part of a society. The cultural system influenced the reasons and way the documents were created. It is these cultural systems that historical archaeologists of the future will be attempting to recreate. Thus, archives should seriously reconsider broadening their collecting strategies so as to document an entire society at a given time rather than focusing on business or other official transactions. Items that initially appear to hold no value may be worth preserving. The smallest piece of ephemera could reveal insight into society sometime down the road.

However, it is known that not everything can be or even should be kept in an archives. This is one of the troubling parts of archival appraisal theory. One never knows what may be of the greatest value in the future, not even what may be of use a few years from now. As archivists appraise collections, they should consider not just what is of interest at the present moment, but what may be of interest as time passes. The next important step is to ensure that seekers can find these golden nuggets of history.

It is well known that most archives have a processing backlog and not enough staff to handle it all. Green and Meissner (2005) proposed that archives consider ways to minimally process collections to make them available to researchers more quickly.

“While archivists have almost entirely given up on item-level description, we continue to

arrange and do multiple types of minor preservation work at the item level” (Green & Meissner, 2005, p. 229). Even worse, archives are creating finding aids and not making them available online. “We almost uniformly create finding aids that include collection and series descriptions, administrative or biographical notes, and folder lists, barely half of us make our descriptive work accessible through OPACs or Web-mounted documents” (Green & Meissner, 2005, pp. 229-230). Archives need to consider their users when processing collections. Collections should be processed even at the most minimal level so that some sort of description can be created and made available online where researchers can find them.

When writing finding aids, archivists should carefully consider the subject headings they select. The terms that best describe a collection are important. But, what terms might someone use and hope to find a certain collection? Subject headings are included in finding aids and even encoded in the EAD versions. They should also be included in any descriptions on the repository’s website so they may be found by spiders to be included in Web searches.

Archives should consider making their catalog available on their website. It should also be made available in such a way that general keyword searches can be performed. Even with a hint of what might be in the collection, a researcher can contact the archivist for more in-depth information.

Unfortunately, scanning all documents is a Herculean task for archives with the focus usually on special items or collections. One way to start is to digitize materials as they are requested for reference and make them available at that time. The work is done for one person and can then be made available for any researcher to use. This is rather piecemeal, but if the items are obviously of research interest (i.e., someone has requested it), it may be of broader interest than is known. For items that have been scanned, archives could cross-reference the documents with researchers' requests. Future researchers can then look at the documents that were viewed and scanned for others with similar research topics.

Archives need to work at becoming more Web-based for their services. The Internet has gotten to a point where there are presumptions about the kind of information out there to be found. So much scholarly research can be done sitting in a comfortable chair in one's home – through museums exhibiting virtual collections or libraries providing databases of journals and a variety of other materials. Archives need to join these other entities in making information available online even if it is only to give more information about their general holdings. If researchers can find which repositories hold the collections they want, they will come to view the materials. Archives must not forget that their mission is to preserve and make available materials for future generations of researchers. For some materials, the future is here.

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APPENDIX A – SURVEY QUESTIONS

1. Gender:

- a. Male
- b. Female
- c. Decline to state

2. Age group:

- a. 18-24
- b. 25-34
- c. 35-44
- d. 45-54
- e. 55-64
- f. 65-74
- g. 75 and above

3. Select the option that best represents your degree level (please select all that apply):

- a. BA/BS
- b. MA/MS
- c. PhD
- d. CRM
- e. No degree
- f. Other (please specify) _____

4. How long have you been performing research in historical archaeology?
- a. Less than 1 year
 - b. 1-2 years
 - c. 3-5 years
 - d. 6-10 years
 - e. More than 10 years
5. Primary Research:
- a. Geographical Area _____
 - b. Time Period _____
6. Where do you locate documentary evidence?
- a. Archives
 - b. Libraries
 - c. County offices
 - d. Internet
 - e. Other (please specify) _____
7. How long have you used archives as a research resource?
- a. Less than 1 year
 - b. 1-2 years
 - c. 3-5 years
 - d. 6-10 years
 - e. More than 10 years

8. When was your last archives visit?
- a. Yesterday
 - b. Last week
 - c. Last month
 - d. Last year
 - e. More than 2 years ago
 - f. More than 5 years ago
9. How do you discover which repositories contain the information you are seeking?
- a. Students
 - b. Colleagues
 - c. Librarians/Archivists
 - d. Catalogs
 - e. Online Archival Documents (e.g., finding aids)
 - f. Citations/Footnotes
 - g. Web searches
 - h. Other (please specify) _____
10. Do you prefer to:
- a. Travel to archives in order to see original documents
 - b. Be provided with physical copies
 - c. Be provided with digital copies
 - d. Other (please specify) _____

11. Do you conduct any archival research before beginning an archaeological project?

a. Yes

b. No

12. How important are archives:

a. Before you begin field work?

i. Very Important

ii. Important

iii. Somewhat Important

iv. Not Important

b. During field work?

i. Very Important

ii. Important

iii. Somewhat Important

iv. Not Important

c. After field work?

i. Very Important

ii. Important

iii. Somewhat Important

iv. Not Important

13. Preparation

a. I arrange my visit time with archival staff beforehand.

i. Strongly Agree

- ii. Agree
 - iii. Neither Agree nor Disagree
 - iv. Strongly Disagree
- b. I inform archival staff of the materials/information I am interested in studying.
 - i. Strongly Agree
 - ii. Agree
 - iii. Neither Agree nor Disagree
 - iv. Strongly Disagree
- c. I attempt to discover information about particular materials before my visit.
 - i. Strongly Agree
 - ii. Agree
 - iii. Neither Agree nor Disagree
 - iv. Strongly Disagree

14. Typical archival experience

- a. I feel I receive the appropriate amount of aid from archival staff.
 - i. Strongly Agree
 - ii. Agree
 - iii. Neither Agree nor Disagree
 - iv. Strongly Disagree

- b. Requested items are delivered in an acceptable amount of time.
 - i. Strongly Agree
 - ii. Agree
 - iii. Neither Agree nor Disagree
 - iv. Strongly Disagree
- c. Copies of requested items have a reasonable cost.
 - i. Strongly Agree
 - ii. Agree
 - iii. Neither Agree nor Disagree
 - iv. Strongly Disagree
- d. My space needs are met by the archival facilities.
 - i. Strongly Agree
 - ii. Agree
 - iii. Neither Agree nor Disagree
 - iv. Strongly Disagree
- e. My supplies needs (e.g., pencils, paper, gloves, etc.) are met.
 - i. Strongly Agree
 - ii. Agree
 - iii. Neither Agree nor Disagree
 - iv. Strongly Disagree
- f. Finding needed items is not difficult.
 - i. Strongly Agree

- ii. Agree
- iii. Neither Agree nor Disagree
- iv. Strongly Disagree

15. What other services do you seek from archives?

16. What types of primary documentation have you found to be useful to your research? (Please select all that apply.)

- a. Newspapers
- b. Personal diaries
- c. Business papers
- d. Maps
- e. Wills
- f. Probate records
- g. Photographs
- h. Organization records
- i. City plats
- j. Sanborn insurance records
- k. Other (please specify) _____

17. The following are useful for research:

- a. Archivists
 - i. Strongly Agree
 - ii. Agree

- iii. Neither Agree nor Disagree
 - iv. Strongly Disagree
 - v. N/A
- b. Finding Aids or other archival indexing documents available at the archives
- i. Strongly Agree
 - ii. Agree
 - iii. Neither Agree nor Disagree
 - iv. Strongly Disagree
 - v. N/A
- c. Finding Aids or other archival indexing documents available on the archives website
- i. Strongly Agree
 - ii. Agree
 - iii. Neither Agree nor Disagree
 - iv. Strongly Disagree
 - v. N/A
- d. Finding Aids or other archival indexing documents available through an online union database (e.g., Online Archive of California)
- i. Strongly Agree
 - ii. Agree
 - iii. Neither Agree nor Disagree

iv. Strongly Disagree

v. N/A

18. What general improvements could archives make to assist you in your research?

APPENDIX B – SURVEY RESPONSES

Question 1 – Gender

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Male	46	46.5	46.5	46.5
Female	52	52.5	52.5	99.0
Decline to state	1	1.0	1.0	100.0
Total	99	100.0	100.0	

Question 2 – Age Group:

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 18-24	0	0.0	0.0	0.0
25-34	29	29.3	29.3	29.3
35-44	23	23.2	23.2	52.5
45-54	20	20.2	20.2	72.7
55-64	19	19.2	19.2	91.9
65-74	5	5.1	5.1	97.0
75 and above	3	3.0	3.0	100.0
Total	99	100.0	100.0	

Questions 3 – Select the option that best represents your degree level (please select all that apply):

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid BA/BS	25	20.2	20.2	20.2
MA/MS	47	37.9	37.9	58.1
PhD	36	29.0	29.0	87.1
CRM	5	4.0	4.0	91.1
No degree	2	1.6	1.6	92.7
Other	9	7.3	7.3	100.0
Total	124	100.0	100.0	

Other Responses:

MA in progress
ABD
Nearly done with my MA, under 2 months left
BA, almost MA, working on PhD!
MA in progress
CRM is not a degree level, rather it is a field of occupation
ABD

Question 4 – How long have you been performing research in historical archaeology?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Less than 1 year	0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	1-2 years	1	1.0	1.0	1.0
	3-5 years	12	12.1	12.2	13.3
	6-10 years	23	23.2	23.5	36.7
	More than 10 years	62	62.6	63.3	100.0
	Total	98	99.0	100.0	
Missing	System	1	1.0		
	Total	99	100.0		

Question 5 – Primary Research

Geographical Area	Time Period
Ohio Valley	nineteenth century
North American West	Late 19th-Early 20th centuries
Australia	nineteenth century
Ireland, Eastern US & Canada	19th c
Delaware	19th Century
Southeastern United States	Nineteenth Century
southeast	1559 to present
southwest	1860-1960
Great Lakes	1600-1900
Midwest	1700s-1950

Southeastern US	european contact
New York City, Ireland	1840-1890
American south	1800 to 1930s
Mexico	19th century
Southeastern US	late Pleistocene to post-Holocene (1530-present for historic sites)
virginia	1585-1800
Iowa	1840 to present
Kentucky	All
Southwest	All
Northeast US	Early 20th century
Mid Atlantic	17th, 18th, 19th centuries
Ontario, Canada	18th - 20th centuries
New York State	1600-2000
West Coast	1850 forward
Great Lakes, Southeast US	1700-1900
Intermountain West	1850s - present
Maryland	1820-present
Pacific Northwest	1800s forward
Northeastern US	17th through 19th centuries
African American life in the American South	19th Century
Mid Atlantic	Colonial/Federal
Virginia	1700-1865
Midwest	contact thru civil war
north coast of Honduras	16th-18th century
Central America	colonial

Ohio Valley	late 18th through 19th century
Southeastern US	1750-1865
Great Plains and Intermountain areas	19th century
Southeastern US	1800-1900
Midwest and Southeast	Colonial and early American
SW United States	Spanish Colonial
NM,CO,AZ,UT,NV,CA	All Time Periods 12000BP to Present
Virginia	All periods
northeastern US	mostly 19th century, but also colonial to 20th century
Mid Atlantic	1600-1950
SE United States	Paleoindian - present
Colorado and New Mexico	Railroad/Mining era onward
Southeastern US and Caribbean	Spanish colonial
Canada	post contact
Africa	1450-1900
NE USA and Mid-Atlantic USA	ALL
southern New England	contact - late 19th C.
North America	19th/20th centuries
New York City	all
Great Lakes	17-19th century
Midwest, Mississippi Valley	all
Southwest US	20th century
Mid-Atlantic	19th-century
Virginia	nineteenth and twentieth century
Virginia; Washington, DC	Colonial period through Civil War; history of archaeology

US middle atlantic and Caribbean	18th-mid-19th century
northeast	17th century
American West	19th-20th cent
Mid-Atlantic and Southeast	colonial-19th century
Southeastern United States	1780-1880
Northeast and Mid-Atlantic US	19th century
Southeastern United States, Cuba	Spanish Colonial Era
Alaska	1760-1950
SE US	contact
Southeast	Early 19th Century
Western US/Alaska	1900-1970's
Northeast and Far West	all - but focused now on 19th-20th centuries
Australasia, North America	late 18th century onwards
Caribbean	1700 to 1850
California	1776-Present
Caribbean	Eighteenth-nineteenth century
Mideast, Central	18th to 20th century
New England	late 17th to mid-19th centuries
Southwest United States	mid-nineteenth century to early twentieth century
Southeastern United States	1830s-1930s, broadly
Americas	post 1492
Pacific Northwest	19th & 20th centuries
southeastern U.S.	17th-20th c.
Midwest, Mid-Atlantic	Mid-Late 1800s
Colorado	1860-1970s

US North East	18-19th century
southeast US	1670-1860
southwestern United States	Spanish colonial
Southern California	1880-1950
Western North America	1850-1930
california	1700s
New England	18th century
plains, rockies, california	prehistoric and 1600 to present
Northeast USA primarily NY & MA, Midwest USA primarily OH & MI	Nineteenth & twentieth centuries
Eastern U.S.	late 1700s - mid-twentieth century

Question 6 – Where do you locate documentary evidence?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Archives	17	17.2	17.9	17.9
Libraries	12	12.1	12.6	30.5
County offices	5	5.1	5.3	35.8
Internet	6	6.1	6.3	42.1
Other	55	55.6	57.9	100.0
Total	95	96.0	100.0	
Missing System	4	4.0		
Total	99	100.0		

Other Responses:

All of the above, plus private collections (such as family histories, companies, etc)

All of the above

All of the above

All above: Archives, libraries, county offices, internet.

All of the above

all of the above

all of the above except county offices

all of the above, as well as funeral homes, etc

all of the above

All of the above

All of the above

All of the above

all of the above choices

all of the above

all of the above!

All of the above

This should be a multipule click set up, I use all of those and more
archives and libraries

all of the above

all of the above

all the above

Archives and Microfilms of Archives - question should have been multiple selection

archives, libraries, and internet-- this should allow multiple selection

all of the above except internet

All of the above (cant select more than one)

I use archives, libraries and county offices

All of the above

All of the above

All of them--archives, libraries, county records, internet

All of the above

all of the above

ALL of the above

all of the above and more - local historical societies, local historians, etc.

all of the above (for example 250 Water St., New Amsterdam's seaport now 3 or 4 blocks from the East River.

local historical societies, collectors, govt agencies

all of the above

all of the above areas, plus state and federal courthouses

all of the above

All of the above

archives, libraries, county offices, internet, private collections

All of above, oral sources, private collections

all of the above

A single choice is not applicable here -- all of the above plus others.

all of the above

All of above plus documents in family hands

All of the above, primary internet through a digitized library site

all of the above and building own archives

all of the above

all of the above, primarily archives

Archives, Libraries, County Offices, the Internet, living decendents and anywhere else I can

all of the above, primarily archives

all of the above

all of the above

all of the above

All of the above

Question 7 - How long have you used archives as a research resource?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Less than 1 year	1	1.0	1.1	1.1
	1-2 years	4	4.0	4.3	5.3
	3-5 years	13	13.1	13.8	19.1
	6-10 years	22	22.2	23.4	42.6
	More than 10 years	54	54.5	57.4	100.0
	Total	94	94.9	100.0	
Missing	System	5	5.1		
	Total	99	100.0		

Question 8 – When was your last archives visit?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yesterday	7	7.1	7.4	7.4
	Last week	18	18.2	19.1	26.6
	Last month	41	41.4	43.6	70.2
	Last year	20	20.2	21.3	91.5
	More than 2 years ago	8	8.1	8.5	100.0
	More than 5 years ago	0	0.0	0.0	100.0
	Total	94	94.9	100.0	
Missing	System	5	5.1		
Total		99	100.0		

Question 9 – How do you discover which repositories contain the information you are seeking?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Students	14	3.5	3.5	3.5
	Colleagues	55	13.7	13.9	17.4
	Librarians/Archivists	66	16.4	16.7	34.1
	Catalogs	47	11.7	11.9	46.0
	Online Archival Documents (e.g., finding aids)	70	17.4	17.7	63.6
	Citations/Footnotes	62	15.4	15.7	79.3
	Web Searches	66	16.4	16.7	96.0
	Other	16	4.0	4.0	100.0
	Total	396	98.5	100.0	
	Missing System	6	1.5		
Total		402	100.0		

Other Responses:

Brainstorming and then just asking who I think could have the info - typically for uncatalogued private collections (e.g. stuff in attics)
personal contact....call the repositories
all of the above to varying degrees
All of the above
Discussion with colleagues
colleagues and librarians/archivists

I go to the county seat of the county in question, ie near my site.
all of the above
all of the above except web searches, and online docs
Published Archival Documents and Indices
Knowledge of history and experience
Government Offices, Land Managing Agencies BLM & FS
research is organic--you go where you are lead
local historians
luck
Past experience

Question 10 – Do you prefer to:

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Travel to archives in order to see original documents	34	34.3	36.6	36.6
Be provided with physical copies	15	15.2	16.1	52.7
Be provided with digital copies	39	39.4	41.9	94.6
Other	5	5.1	5.4	100.0
Total	93	93.9	100.0	
Missing System	6	6.1		
Total	99	100.0		

Other Responses:

All of the above, dependent on what the nature of the document.
travel if possible, if not any kind of copies are great
all of the above
depends on the condition of the document
All of the above. Often travel is not possible due to funding, but physical AND digital copies are best

Question 11 – Do you conduct any archival research before beginning an archaeological project?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	90	90.9	96.8	96.8
	No	3	3.0	3.2	100.0
	Total	93	93.9	100.0	
Missing	System	6	6.1		
	Total	99	100.0		

Question 12 – How important are archives:

Before you begin field work?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Very Important	71	71.7	76.3	76.3
	Important	15	15.2	16.1	92.5
	Somewhat Important	6	6.1	6.5	98.9
	Not Important	1	1.0	1.1	100.0
	Total	93	93.9	100.0	
Missing	System	6	6.1		
	Total	99	100.0		

During field work?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Very Important	34	34.3	36.6	36.6
	Important	35	35.4	37.6	74.2
	Somewhat Important	19	19.2	20.4	94.6
	Not Important	5	5.1	5.4	100.0
	Total	93	93.9	100.0	
Missing	System	6	6.1		
	Total	99	100.0		

After field work?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Very Important	72	72.7	77.4	77.4
	Important	18	18.2	19.4	96.8
	Somewhat Important	3	3.0	3.2	100.0
	Not Important	0	0.0	0.0	100.0
	Total	93	93.9	100.0	
Missing	System	6	6.1		
	Total	99	100.0		

Question 13 – Preparation

I arrange my visit time with archival staff beforehand.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	30	30.3	32.3	32.3
	Agree	26	26.3	28.0	60.2
	Neither	25	25.3	26.9	87.1
	Disagree	12	12.1	12.9	100.0
	Strongly Disagree	0	0.0	0.0	100.0
	Total	93	93.9	100.0	
Missing	System	6	6.1		
	Total	99	100.0		

I inform archival staff of the materials/information I am interested in studying.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	42	42.4	45.2	45.2
	Agree	38	38.4	40.9	86.0
	Neither	11	11.1	11.8	97.8
	Disagree	2	2.0	2.2	100.0
	Strongly Disagree	0	0.0	0.0	100.0
	Total	93	93.9	100.0	
Missing	System	6	6.1		
	Total	99	100.0		

I attempt to discover information about particular materials before my visit.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	50	50.5	53.8	53.8
	Agree	31	31.3	33.3	87.1
	Neither	8	8.1	8.6	95.7
	Disagree	4	4.0	4.3	100.0
	Strongly Disagree	0	0.0	0.0	100.0
	Total	93	93.9	100.0	
Missing	System	6	6.1		
	Total	99	100.0		

Question 14 – Typical archival experience

I feel I receive the appropriate amount of aid from archival staff.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	17	17.2	18.7	18.7
	Agree	51	51.5	56.0	74.7
	Neither	15	15.2	16.5	91.2
	Disagree	8	8.1	8.8	100.0
	Strongly Disagree	0	0.0	0.0	100.0
	Total	91	91.9	100.0	
Missing	System	8	8.1		
	Total	99	100.0		

Requested items are delivered in an acceptable amount of time.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	11	11.1	12.1	12.1
	Agree	58	58.6	63.7	75.8
	Neither	17	17.2	18.7	94.5
	Disagree	4	4.0	4.4	98.9
	Strongly Disagree	1	1.0	1.1	100.0
	Total	91	91.9	100.0	
Missing	System	8	8.1		
	Total	99	100.0		

Copies of requested items have a reasonable cost.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	7	7.1	7.7	7.7
	Agree	42	42.4	46.2	53.8
	Neither	15	15.2	16.5	70.3
	Disagree	23	23.2	25.3	95.6
	Strongly Disagree	4	4.0	4.4	100.0
	Total	91	91.9	100.0	
Missing	System	8	8.1		
	Total	99	100.0		

My space needs are met by the archival facilities.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	14	14.1	15.4	15.4
	Agree	56	56.6	61.5	76.9
	Neither	15	15.2	16.5	93.4
	Disagree	6	6.1	6.6	100.0
	Strongly Disagree	0	0.0	0.0	100.0
	Total	91	91.9	100.0	
Missing	System	8	8.1		
	Total	99	100.0		

My supplies needs (e.g., pencils, paper, gloves, etc.) are met.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	9	9.1	9.9	9.9
	Agree	47	47.5	51.6	61.5
	Neither	23	23.2	25.3	86.8
	Disagree	12	12.1	13.2	100.0
	Strongly Disagree	0	0.0	0.0	100.0
	Total	91	91.9	100.0	
Missing	System	8	8.1		
	Total	99	100.0		

Finding needed items is not difficult.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	1	1.0	1.1	1.1
	Agree	39	39.4	42.9	44.0
	Neither	27	27.3	29.7	73.6
	Disagree	21	21.2	23.1	96.7
	Strongly Disagree	3	3.0	3.3	100.0
	Total	91	91.9	100.0	
Missing	System	8	8.1		
	Total	99	100.0		

Question 15 – What other services do you seek from archives?

information about specific resources, such as what kinds of information they contain and how those resources were created. Also where could I find similar types of information.
I would like more finding aides available on-line.
I expect the material to be accessible. I have gone to archives to find material missing including microfilms
I often need to photograph items (respectfully and without flash) and I appreciate when archivists are at least flexible/reasonable about photography. I hate being forced to suffice with nothing (not helpful when dealing with maps for instance) or to only have poor resolution scans/photos prepared by the archivists - if I do it, its the way I want it and the archivists can do other more important things. I am, of course, amenable to legitimate concerns about the materials, but blanket objections to photography are unpleasant.
one central searchable database (web based) that will locate documents from all archives, repositories, libraries, etc.. and in turn direct me to those sites (web or physical address). This would ultimately (ideally) include the entire country--from small house museum documents up to the national archives and everything in between.
state and local history book store
information on materials yet to be processed or are in process to become available hopefully before I finish my study.
Photo reproduction, internet archives/sources
maps, local knowledge
A cheery attitude
None
electronic copies of photographs and or fragile documents
access to the archives, suggestions for other archival sources
None that I can think of.

none
permission to publish images of documents, digital finding aids rather than physical ones.
Knowledgable staff is key, but variable in my experience
Unsure how to answer this question.
Collaboration, discussion of projects with peers
Copy permissions, other sources-collections
1. more detailed on line catalogs, to identify useful materials before going. 2. ability to get copies, not just make notes
Again, it depends on the information I seek and the capabilities of the facility.
If the archivist has a good understanding of the archives they work with I often ask their advice or opinion on how to use the records effectively. Sometimes there are "little known" records that only those "in the know" can access.
photographs when possible
none
Property maps
Advice on complementary data - data bases, expertise as subject or topically-focussed scholars in addition to working as archivists. Many publish in their own right.
historic map scanning
maps and historical photographs; records of archaeologists who worked in the area in the past; correspondence; deeds; family papers; census and city directories;
linkages
Copying and reproduction permissions Cross-references to other archives
Online access to digital imagery, as well as searchable indices and calendars, is a high priority in my opinion, and distinguishes accessible archives from those that are far less accessible. The AGI in Sevilla is a notable example of such modernization.
easier access to maps, often they don't understand why I would want access
Continuous research and general advice, especially from specialized archives.

information about relevant sources that I do not already know about
none
links
None
References to other sources/archives.
Reproduction of historic photographs
Advise on what else may be available and where.

Question 16 – What types of primary documentation have you found to be useful to your research? (Please select all that apply.)

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Newspapers	79	10.8	10.9	10.9
	Personal diaries	68	9.3	9.4	20.3
	Business papers	60	8.2	8.3	28.6
	Maps	90	12.3	12.4	41.0
	Wills	59	8.1	8.1	49.2
	Probate records	61	8.3	8.4	57.6
	Photographs	82	11.2	11.3	68.9
	Organization records	46	6.3	6.4	75.3
	City plats	65	8.9	9.0	84.3
	Sanborn insurance records	69	9.4	9.5	93.8
	Other	45	6.1	6.2	100.0
	Total	724	98.9	100.0	
Missing	System	8	1.1		
	Total	732	100.0		

Other Responses:

Deeds, tax records, death records, census records, marriage registers, naturalization records, division books, city directories, cemetery records, government reports.

Deed records; tax records; marriage records; military records.

Deed, census (population, agriculture, manufactures, and slave), and orphan's court records. Birth, death, and marriage certificates.

family bibles, phone books, census, military records, government papers and collections.
Census records; court documents
letters, medical and surgical casebooks
funeral home day books, city council minutes, county commissioner's minutes, family histories and genealogy information, tax records, civil court records, county history, personal interviews, special collections
Magazines, catalogues, technical documents such architectural plans
Published pamphlets and booklets related to community events and celebrations
Blueprints, "as built" plans, military records, census records, invoices, passenger and cargo manifests
census, tax records, city directories, etc.
Deeds, census
Personal correspondence.
oral history
the answers here are biased towards North American researchers. I primarily use legal cases, appointments to office, letters to the spanish crown, licenses to import slaves, ships manifests, and personal letters.
This item is biased toward North America. In Spanish America, we have legal cases; petitions; census records; church records; and letters, none of which fit in these categories.
census, deeds, store ledgers, tax records, city council minutes, corporation applications, road surveys, military pensions/muster in and out rolls/regimental records
orderly books, official records, participant correspondence, military pension records
Government records (colonial and American), maritime documents (ship logs, manifests, etc.)
Spanish Archives of New Mexico and other primary sources
GLO Maps and Survey Notes, Government Documents and Maps, Church Records and Registries
Deeds, genealogies
Just about any possible written record that could provide a clue to my research can be significant.
military records city and business directories census records
travel literature, advertisements
Histories created during the Great Depression by the WPA in NYC. "Chain of titles" from the sale of properties. Previous research by historical archeologists.
letters in private hands, family collections of primary documents
County histories
City directories; tax records; correspondence; ledgers; unpublished manuscripts; journals; personal papers; artwork (paintings, prints; etc.); previous archaeological investigations; fire insurance records

government docs--titheable and tax records, military records, church records
Hey- I've been doing this over 30 years, the list is almost endless.
deeds, tax records, census records, city directories
Governmental financial accounts, official correspondence, petitions, military service records, shipping registries, meeting minutes, census, sacramental registries, etc.
historic post cards
landowner information
tax lists, town records (of meetings, votes), court cases
quit claim deeds, surveys, property records in general
catalogs, collectors manuscripts
deeds, census records, other historic maps
as built plat maps, ICC valuation materials, census records, water right court records
directories and reverse directories, church documents, grantor/grantee index
WPA narratives
Town Council Records
Letter correspondence, stereoscopic views, deed records

Question 17 – The following are useful for research:

Archivists

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	39	39.4	42.9	42.9
	Agree	38	38.4	41.8	84.6
	Neither	13	13.1	14.3	98.9
	Disagree	1	1.0	1.1	100.0
	Strongly Disagree	0	0.0	0.0	100.0
	N/A	0	0.0	0.0	100.0
	Total	91	91.9	100.0	
Missing	System	8	8.1		
	Total	99	100.0		

Finding Aids or other archival indexing documents available at the archives

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	41	41.4	45.1	45.1
	Agree	42	42.4	46.2	91.2
	Neither	7	7.1	7.7	98.9
	Disagree	1	1.0	1.1	100.0
	Strongly Disagree	0	0.0	0.0	100.0
	N/A	0	0.0	0.0	100.0
	Total	91	91.9	100.0	
Missing	System	8	8.1		
	Total	99	100.0		

Finding Aids or other archival indexing documents available on the archives website

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	59	59.6	64.8	64.8
	Agree	22	22.2	24.2	89.0
	Neither	9	9.1	9.9	98.9
	Disagree	1	1.0	1.1	100.0
	Strongly Disagree	0	0.0	0.0	100.0
	N/A	0	0.0	0.0	100.0
	Total	91	91.9	100.0	
Missing	System	8	8.1		
	Total	99	100.0		

Finding Aids or other archival indexing documents available through an online union database (e.g., Online Archive of California)

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	35	35.4	38.5	38.5
	Agree	21	21.2	23.1	61.5
	Neither	24	24.2	26.4	87.9
	Disagree	0	0.0	0.0	87.9
	Strongly Disagree	1	1.0	1.1	89.0
	N/A	10	10.1	11.0	100.0
	Total	91	91.9	100.0	
Missing	System	8	8.1		
	Total	99	100.0		

Question 18 – What general improvements could archives make to assist you in your research?

Develop better indexing searchable resources. While the archives that I use have some indexing, not all resources are indexed. Also, it would be very helpful to have many resources entered into a database that would allow searches of the resource and cross referencing, such as city directories, where I could search by name, address, occupation, etc. I feel putting resources into database form would open up a whole new set of opportunities to identify trends and patterns in the past not only for archaeologists, but also historians.

The more information (or actual records) they can make available on line, the better.

improving finding aids so one can locate subjects of interest

Keyword searchable indexes.

Consolidation of records into one holding repository
do their job and have their collections organized. A collection thrown in a box (non archival box) and labeled with a sharpie is not called organizing. Neither is throwing collections in a "holding" room for 7+ years waiting for someone to see what the collection contains. Most archives have no clue what they have, let alone have anything organized in order to put their holdings online for others to search their collections.
Load it all to the web so I can search, find, and download to my system for printing, insertion, etc.
More online search capabilities to determine if a trip to a distant archives will be worthwhile.
digitize EVERYTHING and upload into a searchable database
More staff, more finding aids
digitize
digitize more and get it online
They do a good job already as far as I am concerned
Increased digitization and on-line resources
Put as many indexes on line as possible. This is critical when you need to travel and only have a limited time to actually work at an archive/library.
improved knowledge and cataloging of archives
We happen to have a state archivist who is a control person; not in the sense that you cannot have access, but likes to control how you do research and the use of your research.
Archives are so particularistic, a general database (state, geographical area, etc.) would be very welcome
No suggestions
Make more indexes, catalogs, and actual archival holdings available online. This is the Digital Age!

Offer brief training sessions to explain how to request materials, which materials are acceptable to copy vs. which need to be copied only by archives staff, etc.
Off site electronic access or longer hours of access to allow students to have access after business hours and on weekends when there are no classes
Ofcourse having more data bases on-line would be helpful!
I am not sure, but I can tell you that I am not overly fond of microfilm and wish there was a better way to record and present delicate historic documents.
Put everything online!
digitizing everything
Better finding aids. It would be helpful if finding aids indexed documents by people and place instead of just providing a title and a brief description.
make more documents available in electronic form and/or on Internet
digitize all their fragile holdings, then start digitizing everything else, starting with the oldest - yes it will be a long process but it will help save materials and increase their use in the long run
More online catalogs of content, digitizing more content and making it available online (free and/or fee based).
I would really like to see more and better indices of collections. Since some collections are so large, it is nearly impossible to efficiently and effectively utilize them in the time available, even if one is relatively certain that they contain pertinent information. I would also like to see archivists with more expertise in some of the archival collections available so they can direct researchers to pertinent sections, indices, etc.
Digitize Collections and make collections available to public and scholars on internet or digital collections with no user fees.
More available online!!!
scan documents and make them available on line, like Ancestry.com has done with the US census data - saves a LOT of return trips for follow-up data

Some facilities are better organized than others. Sometimes the archive has to pull info for me. Other times I can go right to the source. So, improvements are on a case by case basis. For example, I can pretty much find what I need at the Library of Virginia, but at the LOC their system is horrible--you have to put in a request by a certain time, and they make you wait sometimes up to two hours to pull the material. Just depends what type of system each place has in use.
More user-friendly hours--but salary monies are always a limitation.
I found some questions very difficult to answer as they are so general. I use archives in the US, Europe and Africa and there is a great deal of variation even with countries. Answers to the questions "Have archivists been helpful" or "Have web based resources been of use?" really depend on individual settings. generally, i think the biggest problem to overcome is the availability of catalogs (in any format). In many instances important archives in part of Europe (Portugal) and Africa have no guides - or at least guides of use.
more digital accessibility through the internet. Paid professional searches with set deadlines
Standardized cataloging system
In some cases better maintenance of equipment, i.e., micro- fiche, - film, - card, etc., has an equipment stress that can be frustrating, the cycle of repair/replacement can be quite long. for some installations. Current electronic archives, though, are outstanding!
Money
more complete finding online finding aids with more full-text digital services.
Keywords. Lots and lots of keywords.
Archives could provide more staff to care for collections and assist patrons. As with archaeologists, archives are generally not fully staffed.
more personnel
Increased computerized searchable databases from old card based systems, still in use in many places- Removal of restrictions for qualified researchers in "sensitive"

government records (severe problem)
better copying equipment, cheaper copying costs, more efficient searching indexes
better hours, better staff, better facilities
Facilities for laptop usage while consulting original materials, wireless network access for access to internet indices, articles, etc. during archival research.
I still feel that it is a somewhat hit and miss proposition-- I wish there were more general and centrally available (online?) references to guide me to the various sources.
more knowledgeable staff available - more online access
Let us use pens - not just pencils. Not be so suspicious although I have seen some reasons why (e.g. cut out ms sections of primary sources etc. - shocking!).
Scanning facilities to cut down on use of printing at the archive (and reduce cost of copying)
Some archive search engines are hard to use, and some materials are not always where one would think they would be. Perhaps the answer is more cross indexing.
Most archivists who have been where there are for some time do have a sense of what they have or do not have, however some are unaware the condition the records are in- if the maps are ripped for example
Some archivists are very helpful, but others are not and seem to lack the time to assist people who are not already quite familiar with the records/record types held by the archive. As archaeologists, archival documents are not necessarily the source material that we are most familiar with, so a little bit more time explaining finding aids, the collections etc. would sometimes be much appreciated. Also, many archivists seem very suspicious of people who look young (grad students, young professionals) who ask to see original documents.
Use better search engines for online catalogues.
Archives in general are doing an excellent job at gradually making more and more sources available online. While such information in the long run never truly replaces a personal visit, it makes pre-visit preparation easier and visits more productive. Overall,

archivists have set a fine example for archaeological collection managers to live up to.
better indexes
Stop throwing away catalogs, part books, operation manuals, and similiar artifact identifcation sources. Make working copies of items they are unwilling for us to use.
better copy facilities, larger map copies, or scanning abilities, digital copies of maps or documents available online or download
having more on-line and digitized documents, and having good quality copying available
better copiers or copy options, more digital
I am more comfortable working with digital resources, so it would be nice if frequently used sources were digitized and made available.
can't think of any right now
Reduce cost of photo reproductions
The more material information on-line such as finding aids, hours, prices for copying, and examples of collections, the higher visibility and ability to find items for researchers, especially those out of state. The variety between archives is astounding. Perhaps more can be done from professional/well funded agencies to help out the smaller/underfunded collections.