

The Society of American Archivists

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Survey of the Archival Profession—1979

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Previous Surveys

Four quantitative analyses of the archival profession have been made prior to the salary survey undertaken in 1979. The first, made by Ernst Posner in 1956, was based on a few more than 400 replies to questionnaires used to compile the Society's first membership *Directory*. Perhaps because the information was collected for a directory and not for statistical comparisons, data were received from about 80 percent of the individual members (417) in the United States. The Posner survey was not intended to be, and was not, an in-depth analysis of the profession, but did provide some basic information concerning the composition of the Society's membership.¹ The second over-all analysis was made by Frank B. Evans and Robert M. Warner in 1971.² It was based on 423 returns to a questionnaire mailed to about 1,060 members of the Society in March 1970. It provided a great deal of useful information but, as the compilers carefully pointed out, it no doubt made the profession look better than it actually was because only about 40 percent of the members responded and they represented the top echelons of their agencies.

In the first two surveys, except for information on the number of female members of the Society, no attempt was made to compare the roles of women with men. By 1972, however, many members of the Society were interested in knowing how the women fared. Hence, Mabel E. Deutrich was asked to prepare another study which would compare the women with the men.³ Her survey was based in part on information gleaned from the

¹ Ernst Posner, "What, Then, Is the American Archivist, This New Man?" *American Archivist* 20 (Jan. 1957): 4-6.

² Frank B. Evans and Robert M. Warner, "American Archivists and Their Society: A Composite View," *American Archivist* 34 (Apr. 1971): 157-72. A joint survey of the salary structure of historical and archival agencies was made by Philip P. Mason and William T. Alderson, Jr., in 1966. See Philip P. Mason, "Economic Status of the Archival Profession, 1965-66," *American Archivist* 30 (Jan. 1967): 105-22.

³ Mabel E. Deutrich, "Women in Archives: Ms. versus Mr. Archivist," *American Archivist* 36 (Apr. 1973): 171-81.

American Archivist, but especially from replies to a "SAA Membership Directory and Profile Questionnaire" distributed initially to members late in 1970, and then to all new members when they joined the Society. Approximately 875 returns were received from an estimated 1,100 questionnaires. A 50 percent sampling of the returns was used in the survey.⁴ The most comprehensive previous survey of the archival profession was conducted by an Ad Hoc Committee on the Status of Women in the Archival Profession,⁵ established by the Society in the fall of 1972. The following year the committee prepared two questionnaires, one directed to individuals (all members of the Society, and some non-members) and the others to heads of selected archival institutions. Its report was based on an analysis of 672 individual and 147 institutional replies. The report made extensive comparisons of male and female archivists, e.g., education, years of experience, salaries, assignment of duties, and publications. To make the report meaningful, separate factors were correlated, e.g., education with years of experience, education with salaries.

As recommended in the report on the status of women, the women's committee became a standing committee in the Society. Anxious to have continuous information concerning the status and progress of women in the profession, the committee devised a simplified form designed to elicit basic information concerning archivists.⁶

Because other committees and the SAA Council itself had a need for such basic data, the Council approved the survey in 1978. Charles Dollar, of NARS, volunteered to develop a questionnaire for SAA. He completed his work, which included testing the form, in late 1978, and the format was reviewed by the SAA Council.

The 1979 Survey

In April 1979 the questionnaire was mailed to some 3,000 members of SAA and regional archival associations in the United States. It consisted of nineteen questions in the following format:

Personal Information: age; membership in SAA and regional archival organizations; race; sex; highest educational level; archival training.

Employment Information: employment status (full, part-time, not employed); percentage of time in archival work; classification of job type; supervisory responsibility (including number of persons supervised); salary; salary increase; years of archival work (total and with present employer).

Institutional Information: type of employer; location; size of institution.

Respondents were asked to provide information on their status as of 1 April 1979.

The returned questionnaires were coded by volunteers in the Machine-Readable Archives Division of the National Archives. Key punching was done independently and financed by SAA. Mario Lopez, of the Machine-Readable Archives Division, tabulated the data as a training assignment. He used the software package, SPSS, to produce cross-tabulations by computer of variables, frequencies, and mean salaries.

In order to permit comparability for salary figures, only those respondents working on a full-time basis were included in the detailed analysis. Thus the sample size of 1,060 does not include part-timers, retirees, volunteers, or those serving in religious orders.

A profile of the responses which were analyzed for salary distribution is helpful before the principal thrust of the survey is addressed. SAA members comprise 810 (79.1 percent)

⁴ The questionnaires used were "A" through "M" (438 questionnaires).

⁵ SAA, Ad Hoc Committee on the Status of Women in the Archival Profession, "Report on the Status of Women in the Archival Profession," 29 August 1974, 80 pp. For a summary of the report, see Mabel E. Deutrich, "Women in Archives: A Summary Report of the Committee on the Status of Women in the Archival Profession," *American Archivist* 38 (Jan. 1975): 43-46.

⁶ It is based on the survey form used by the Special Libraries Association, which publishes a triennial survey of its membership.

of the group; non-members 211 (20.6 percent).⁷ Membership in a regional archival organization is an attribute of 830 (81.1 percent). Only twenty-two respondents list a category other than “White” under the “Your Race” question. This precluded any examination of salary trends based on racial group membership.

Regarding gender distribution, 467 (45.6 percent) of the respondents are female; 555 (54.2 percent) male. Regional distribution of respondents is as follows, showing the number and, in parentheses, the percentage:

New England	129 (12.7)
Middle Atlantic	164 (16.1)
South Atlantic	221 (21.7)
East South Central	46 (4.5)
West South Central	67 (6.6)
East North Central	166 (16.3)
West North Central	88 (8.7)
Mountain	38 (3.7)
Pacific	98 (9.6)

A set of seven tables is offered here as a means of conveying initial findings. Their purpose is to present in the minimum space the maximum number of level and category breakdowns of responses. Table I, for example, offers age groups by job classification, and thereunder by gender. It is possible, then, to see both age groups and job classifications by totals (T) therein, and male (M) and female (F) respondents as well. Mean salary (M\$) for each group is also given. The most obvious general trend is the nearly universal observation that females are compensated at a lower rate than males. Table II provides another view of compensation by gender, in terms of type of employing institution. Mean salary figures reveal the same pattern regarding gender and also suggest trends in compensation by type of institution.

Tables III and IV focus on education and experience levels, cross tabulating each by job category. Mean salaries of the group suggest that both education and experience bring monetary rewards. The range of rewards within job categories and the apparent value of specific educational credentials across job categories seem to indicate trends within professions. For instance, fifteen years experience appears to be “worth more” to archivists than to records managers (Table IV). But the generalization is difficult to support with this data (as would be some others) because of the relatively small sample of records managers and the differences inherent in the two professions.

The last three tables focus on training and education and are best viewed as a group rather than singly. They also seem to offer sounder generalities about training/education in terms of age group, job category, and experience, than regarding salary level. Table V, for instance, suggests that within job categories training is not relevant to salary level. Table VI, however, reveals that in the two lowest age groups training has a slight but definite relation to higher compensation. Analysis of salary level by age, experience, and education is offered by Table VII. Predictably, it suggests that higher compensation accompanies higher experience and education. Departures from that generality can be attributed to small sample size within some cells. All three of the tables are most interesting for what they reveal about distribution of training across the profession.

⁷ Totals throughout will not agree, nor will percentages always total 100, because of the number of cases in which respondents failed to answer specific survey questions.

TABLE I: *Mean Salary by Job Category / Age Group by Gender*

Age Group	Gender	Archivist	Manuscript	Supervisor	Librarian
		N - M\$	N - M\$	N - M\$	N - M\$
20-29	T	109 - 12,215	31 - 12,460	16 - 15,067	30 - 11,553
	M	47 - 12,901	14 - 13,009	11 - 16,705	10 - 11,729
	F	62 - 11,694	17 - 12,007	5 - 11,463	20 - 11,465
30-39	T	200 - 16,613	44 - 15,025	89 - 19,635	55 - 13,755
	M	130 - 17,120	27 - 15,389	59 - 20,073	24 - 14,470
	F	70 - 15,682	17 - 14,447	30 - 18,772	31 - 13,201
40-49	T	70 - 18,903	17 - 17,138	55 - 22,762	19 - 14,776
	M	43 - 21,949	9 - 18,644	35 - 23,753	5 - 15,710
	F	27 - 14,051	8 - 15,444	20 - 19,791	14 - 14,442
50-59	T	56 - 17,498	13 - 16,706	48 - 22,790	23 - 18,536
	M	20 - 20,543	5 - 18,248	29 - 26,695	3 - 20,633
	F	36 - 15,806	8 - 15,742	19 - 16,830	20 - 18,221
60-69	T	37 - 19,804	6 - 17,818	19 - 24,057	11 - 19,959
	M	21 - 22,016	1 - 25,000	9 - 26,327	4 - 25,200
	F	16 - 16,901	5 - 16,382	10 - 22,013	7 - 18,108
70 and above	T	3 - 8,064	1 - 33,000	1 - 18,000	0 - 0
	M	1 - 11,200	1 - 33,000	0 - 0	0 - 0
	F	2 - 6,496	0 - 0	1 - 18,000	0 - 0
Totals	T	475 - 16,241	112 - 15,141	228 - 21,101	138 - 14,708
	M	262 - 17,787	57 - 16,046	143 - 22,451	46 - 15,170
	F	213 - 14,341	55 - 14,202	85 - 18,520	92 - 14,477

N - mean number
M\$ - mean salary

Comparisons: 1973 and 1979 Surveys

Because of the different formats of the two surveys, only some general comparisons are possible. They are, however, of interest, and reflect well on the profession. Respondents to the 1979 survey are slightly younger than those in 1973; 52 percent were under forty years old in 1973, and 60 percent in 1979. The general educational level is higher. Those with masters or doctorates comprise 81 percent of the 1979 sample, up from 72 percent in 1973. Those with less than a bachelor's degree dropped from 7 percent to less than 4 percent. Training is up as well, with only 28 percent of the 1979 group having no archival training, as opposed to 40 percent in 1973.

Total average salary was up by 25 percent between the two surveys, with compensation of those with the Ph.D. rising by an average of 11 percent. No significant difference in salary increase is observable for age groups. Those with over fifteen years experience show the highest average increase in salary: \$5,900. Average salary increase for the total sample is \$3,500. The average salary increase for females was greater than for males by only about fifty dollars, but the percent of increase for females was 29.4, compared to 22.2 for males. In terms of education, experience, years with present employer, and age, salaries of females continue to lag behind those of males.

Beyond the 1979 Survey

While there is no doubt that the 1979 survey is the most comprehensive and extensive such study of the archival profession to date, some caveats are necessary. Its findings are representative of the profession only insofar as 42 percent of the SAA membership and

TABLE I — continued

Professor-Teacher N - MS	Records Manager N - MS	Non Teaching Historian N - MS	Museum Curator N - MS	Other and No Answer N - MS
0 - 0	5 - 13,747	3 - 15,004	3 - 15,004	9 - 11,130
0 - 0	2 - 14,118	0 - 0	1 - 10,500	5 - 9,995
0 - 0	3 - 13,500	3 - 15,004	1 - 10,608	4 - 12,550
9 - 17,444	10 - 17,970	3 - 14,546	3 - 18,400	17 - 16,542
5 - 18,500	7 - 19,533	2 - 13,250	2 - 10,250	8 - 16,865
4 - 16,375	3 - 14,524	1 - 17,140	1 - 22,700	9 - 16,255
4 - 23,592	1 - 17,000	2 - 10,850	1 - 11,000	5 - 20,063
4 - 23,592	1 - 17,000	2 - 10,850	1 - 11,000	5 - 20,063
0 - 0	0 - 0	0 - 0	0 - 0	0 - 0
7 - 24,062	3 - 22,533	2 - 21,418	2 - 13,074	7 - 15,365
4 - 27,985	3 - 22,533	1 - 25,000	0 - 0	2 - 15,625
3 - 18,833	0 - 0	1 - 17,836	2 - 13,074	5 - 15,261
1 - 23,000	4 - 18,980	3 - 30,338	0 - 0	2 - 26,292
0 - 0	2 - 22,000	2 - 29,007	0 - 0	2 - 26,292
1 - 23,000	2 - 15,960	1 - 33,000	0 - 0	0 - 0
0 - 0	0 - 0	0 - 0	0 - 0	0 - 0
0 - 0	0 - 0	0 - 0	0 - 0	0 - 0
0 - 0	0 - 0	0 - 0	0 - 0	0 - 0
21 - 21,086	23 - 17,781	13 - 18,785	8 - 14,182	40 - 16,046
15 - 22,908	15 - 19,571	7 - 18,745	4 - 13,500	22 - 16,774
8 - 18,125	8 - 14,424	6 - 18,831	4 - 14,864	18 - 15,155

19 percent of the members of regional groups are representative. Some limitations of the questionnaire became obvious to those who coded, tabulated, and analyzed the data. For instance, the job category section of the instrument allowed only responses of "Archivist," "Manuscripts librarian/Manuscripts curator," "Administrator/Manager/Supervisor of above categories," and "Other (please specify)." Therefore the job categories for librarians, teachers, records managers, historians, and museum curators were created by those who coded the data from various responses. The question on training did not distinguish between training provided by the respondent's employer and that pursued independently. Nor did it distinguish between training taken before and after entering employment in an archival position. All of those distinctions could provide a more meaningful view of the profession.

This survey, for all these and other minor limitations, can provide far more information about the sample of respondents than is given here. Therefore, further analyses of the findings will be published in future issues of the *SAA Newsletter*. Such reports can focus, for instance, on specific institutional categories of respondents, such as business/association or state archivists. Training can be analyzed by type and size of institution. The possibilities are numerous. Suggestions are welcome.

The 1979 survey can serve as a sound point of departure for future periodic studies of the profession, to which SAA is committed. Comparability of future questionnaires with this one will not only tell us much about trends, but will be relatively easy to tabulate and analyze by computer. It may be desirable also to examine new areas and issues in the future. For example, the relationship between respondents' publication experience (perhaps by type of publication) and salary level would be interesting, especially when com-

pared by gender. Indication of size of city in which institutions are located might allow comparisons of salary levels to cost-of-living indexes. We must be mindful, of course, of balancing what is possible with what we would like to know, and avoid issuing a burdensome questionnaire. In order to facilitate further analysis and comparability with future studies, all of the completed questionnaires, computer printouts, and data used in the 1979 study will be preserved with the official records of the Society of American Archivists.

TABLE II: *Mean Salary by Gender / Type of Employer*

<u>Type of Employer</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>
	N - M\$	N - M\$	N - M\$
Fed. Gov't. Not NARS	33 - 23,850	18 - 24,487	15 - 23,087
NARS	103 - 25,373	70 - 26,146	31 - 23,220
State	101 - 17,730	70 - 18,697	31 - 15,548
Municipal, County	34 - 15,826	21 - 17,547	13 - 13,048
College- University	403 - 16,085	211 - 17,529	192 - 14,498
Historical Society	103 - 14,606	51 - 16,411	52 - 12,836
Public Library	43 - 14,781	19 - 14,374	24 - 15,103
Private Library	43 - 15,228	15 - 17,391	28 - 14,069
Museum	41 - 16,249	18 - 18,914	23 - 14,163
Religious Archives	60 - 12,578	31 - 14,445	29 - 10,584
Business Association	70 - 17,775	28 - 18,284	42 - 17,436

N - mean number
M\$ - mean salary

TABLE III: Mean Salary by Job Category / Highest Educational Level

Highest Educational Level	JOB CATEGORY										Totals N
	Archivist N - MS	Manu- script Curator N - MS	Supervisor N - MS	Librarian N - MS	Professor Teacher N - MS	Records Manager N - MS	Non-Teach- ing Historian N - MS	Museum Curator N - MS	Other and No Answer N - MS		
Ph.D	96 - 19,018		56 - 23,957	8 - 17,243	15 - 22,204	0 - 0	3 - 31,949	2 - 19,850	9 - 19,857	204	
MLS & MA	60 - 16,326	27 - 15,030	30 - 20,945	33 - 16,083	3 - 17,366	0 - 0	0 - 0	0 - 0	3 - 11,453	156	
MA or MS	174 - 16,073	24 - 14,179	66 - 22,943	19 - 13,141	1 - 21,000	9 - 17,746	6 - 15,431	3 - 12,333	7 - 12,061	309	
MLS	49 - 15,192	31 - 15,382	32 - 20,525	67 - 14,787	2 - 18,320	2 - 14,292	0 - 0	0 - 0	5 - 13,180	188	
BA or BS	81 - 14,519	12 - 14,491	32 - 16,194	7 - 10,467	0 - 0	9 - 18,713	4 - 13,942	2 - 12,486	10 - 18,346	157	
Some College	14 - 13,348	2 - 20,150	12 - 12,914	3 - 10,383	0 - 0	3 - 17,414	0 - 0	1 - 11,784	5 - 13,957	40	
High School or GED	1 - 8,000	0 - 0	0 - 0	0 - 0	0 - 0	0 - 0	0 - 0	0 - 0	0 - 0	1	
Total	475 16,241	111 - 15,141	228 - 21,101	137 - 14,708	21 - 21,086	23 - 17,781	13 - 18,785	8 - 14,182	39 - 16,046	1055	

N - mean number
M\$ - mean salary

TABLE IV: Mean Salary by Job Category / Years in Archival Employment

Years Archival Employment	JOB CATEGORY										Totals N
	Archivist N - M\$	Manuscript Curator N - M\$	Supervisor N - M\$	Librarian N - M\$	Professor Teacher N - M\$	Records Manager N - M\$	Non Teach- ing Historian N - M\$	Museum Curator N - M\$	Other and No Answer N - M\$		
Less than 3	143 - 12,123	25 - 11,249	39 - 15,066	65 - 13,951	8 - 17,100	5 - 14,434	4 - 16,653	5 - 15,340	12 - 12,580	306	
4-7	174 - 15,807	36 - 14,527	64 - 19,348	43 - 13,664	4 - 19,342	9 - 15,853	2 - 14,950	1 - 10,608	12 - 13,796	345	
8-15	114 - 19,064	36 - 16,012	79 - 21,819	23 - 17,128	8 - 24,800	4 - 20,627	3 - 20,046	1 - 14,364	8 - 19,705	345	
Over 15	42 - 24,490	14 - 21,746	40 - 28,086	5 - 20,480	0 - 0	4 - 23,150	3 - 16,568	1 - 11,784	4 - 16,842	113	
Total	473 - 16,241	111 - 15,141	222 - 21,101	136 - 14,708	20 - 21,086	22 - 17,781	12 - 18,78	8 - 14,182	36 - 16,046	1040	

TABLE V: Mean Salary by Job Category / Training in Archival Work

Training in Archival Work	JOB CATEGORY									Totals N
	Archivist N - M\$	Manuscripts Curator N - M\$	Supervisor N - M\$	Librarian N - M\$	Professor- Teacher N - M\$	Records Manager N - M\$	Non-Teaching Historian N - M\$	Museum Curator N - M\$	Other and No Answer N - M\$	
Workshop, Institute	172 - 16,295	38 - 15,079	76 - 18,946	38 - 15,329	9 - 22,107	5 - 15,764	3 - 15,300	3 - 14,182	20 - 17,471	364
Academic Course	103 - 15,107	29 - 14,871	31 - 21,173	44 - 15,143	2 - 14,750	3 - 14,308	3 - 27,953	3 - 16,282	2 - 12,780	220
Both of the above	92 - 15,982	14 - 13,415	34 - 21,699	20 - 12,615	3 - 19,666	10 - 19,477	1 - 17,836	0 - 0	8 - 13,319	182
Neither of the above	107 - 17,061	31 - 16,249	88 - 22,707	36 - 14,683	7 - 22,191	5 - 18,448	6 - 16,101	4 - 13,402	9 - 16,756	293
Total	474 - 16,241	112 - 15,141	229 - 21,101	138 - 14,708	21 - 21,086	23 - 17,781	13 - 18,785	10 - 14,182	39 - 16,046	1059

TABLE VI: Mean Salary by Training in Archival Work / Age Group
by Years in Archival Employment

		Training in Archival Work?			
Age Group	Years in Archival Employment	Yes		No	
		N	M\$	N	M\$
20-29	Less than 3	103	11,550	21	10,580
	4-7	56	13,877	19	12,626
	8-15	3	19,346	2	18,200
30-39	Less than 3	71	14,184	37	13,158
	4-7	126	16,263	41	17,925
	8-15	103	19,328	45	18,009
	Over 15	1	22,800	2	21,000
40-49	Less than 3	29	13,472	6	16,786
	4-7	40	16,643	11	21,554
	8-15	41	21,512	20	22,142
	Over 14	14	24,189	9	25,576
50-59	Less than 3	21	14,296	5	20,918
	4-7	33	16,194	9	19,665
	8-15	30	19,530	12	20,766
	Over 15	31	22,419	25	25,678
60-69	Less than 3	7	15,173	4	19,170
	4-7	9	9,883	1	21,000
	8-15	11	17,657	6	17,750
	Over 15	20	24,922	19	25,513

TABLE VII: Mean Salary by Highest Educational Level / Age Group
by Years in Archival Employment

		HIGHEST EDUCATIONAL LEVEL			
Age Group	Years in Archival Employment	Ph.D	MA, MLS, and/or MS	BA or BS	Some College
		N - M\$	N - M\$	N - M\$	N - M\$
20-29	less than 3	3 - 14,200	96 - 11,596	25 - 10,241	0 - 0
	4-7	1 - 21,000	57 - 13,978	15 - 11,550	1 - 12,500
	8-15	1 - 26,000	3 - 17,346	1 - 16,400	0 - 0
30-39	less than 3	34 - 14,893	66 - 13,475	5 - 11,324	4 - 12,772
	4-7	44 - 19,406	96 - 16,091	22 - 13,938	2 - 9,661
	8-15	24 - 20,600	94 - 19,657	26 - 15,832	4 - 11,862
	over 15	2 - 23,150	1 - 18,500	0 - 0	0 - 0
40-49	less than 3	10 - 15,763	21 - 13,864	4 - 10,667	0 - 0
	4-7	17 - 20,332	30 - 16,205	3 - 21,009	1 - 8,000
	8-15	13 - 25,807	39 - 21,061	7 - 18,780	1 - 20,000
	over 15	3 - 22,867	14 - 26,421	5 - 23,842	1 - 11,125
50-59	less than 3	6 - 18,866	15 - 13,605	2 - 22,500	3 - 14,181
	4-7	7 - 17,481	25 - 18,928	5 - 14,860	5 - 8,303
	8-15	9 - 30,568	21 - 18,623	8 - 14,944	4 - 12,335
	over 15	8 - 29,750	22 - 23,856	8 - 21,387	7 - 17,224
60-69	less than 3	0 - 0	10 - 17,055	0 - 0	1 - 12,344
	4-7	3 - 16,333	5 - 9,419	2 - 6,930	0 - 0
	8-15	4 - 18,235	7 - 19,527	3 - 17,166	3 - 13,200
	over 15	9 - 29,183	17 - 28,632	13 - 20,852	2 - 19,356

N - mean number
M\$ - mean salary