

Research Article

The *American Archivist*, 1971 to 1990: A Demographic Analysis of the Articles

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Abstract: Based on an analysis of selected authorship and subject-based variables, 390 articles published in the *American Archivist* from 1971 to 1990 were analyzed. All major articles published during the period were included in the analysis, but other components of the journal were excluded. The primary subject area receiving the highest level of coverage was the General Literature category, followed by Use of Archives and Historical Manuscripts, and Repositories (History, Organization, and Activities). Single authorship was the overwhelming pattern, with almost 90 percent of the articles having only one author. Of a total of 433 authors, 124 (28.6%) were women, and 309 (71.4%) were men. From 1971 to 1990, 25.4 percent of the authors lived in the District of Columbia, followed by 8.5 percent in Massachusetts, 8.2 percent in Michigan, and 7.5 percent in New York. Academic archivists accounted for 22 percent of the authors, followed by federal archivists at 16.5 percent.

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THE *AMERICAN ARCHIVIST* has been published as the official journal of the Society of American Archivists (SAA) since 1938 and has fulfilled an important role in the profession as "the premier archival journal in the United States. The journal revolutionized archival writing and the archival profession, providing a forum for the archival writings that, prior to 1938, had had little chance for publication. . . . The *American Archivist* was the chief professional bond for archivists, the 'voice of the profession.'"¹

The importance of the journal to archivists has been widely acknowledged for the past half century, but there has never been an in-depth examination of the journal. The purpose of the present study is to report an analysis of articles published in the *American Archivist* in the years 1971 to 1990. This twenty-year period, beginning one year before publication of the landmark document "The Society of American Archivists in the Seventies: Report of the Committee for the 1970's"² and continuing for the next nineteen years, has been characterized as the period during which American archival literature matured.³ It is clear that the *American Archivist* played an important part in this process, acting as a clearinghouse for information on significant archival activities and publications from throughout the world, providing a forum for archivists to express their opinions on matters of common interests, and communicating information on the activities and positions of the society. However, only a few systematic attempts have been made to characterize the nature of the journal itself. The focus of the present study was to attempt such a characterization for the articles published

in the *American Archivist*, particularly in terms of subject content and authorship, for these years.

Background

That professional associations such as the Society of American Archivists do not operate in a vacuum but tend rather to reflect the concerns of their members, and to some extent of society as a whole, could be seen in even the earliest days of the *American Archivist*. In his 1983 history of SAA, Frank Cook noted that Theodore C. Pease, the journal's first editor, determined that the journal would be designed along the standard format of existing history journals:

Though some members asserted that "the quarterly should be more of a trade journal than exclusively a magazine of scholarly articles," Pease devoted his editorial work largely to publishing and an analysis of the European archival tradition. . . . More space was given to the use of archival materials in the writing of history than to articles on technical aspects of archival administration, in spite of the announcement in the first issue that "The *American Archivist* will in its contents emphasize the concrete and practical over the general."⁴

Even a cursory examination of current journal issues demonstrates that these creative tensions between the practical and the scholarly nature of the journal have continued to the present, and the *American Archivist* clearly continues to fuse both perspectives into a single whole.

The history of SAA and the *American Archivist* from 1938 to 1960 can be characterized as a period of change and evolution, as the needs and expectations of the membership altered to meet new situations. Although descriptive of the entire period,

¹Richard J. Cox, "American Archival Literature: Expanding Horizons and Continuing Needs," *American Archivist* 50 (Summer 1987): 309-10.

²Philip P. Mason, "The Society of American Archivists in the Seventies: Report of the Committee for the 1970's," *American Archivist* 35 (April 1972): 193-217.

³Cox, "American Archival Literature," 312.

⁴J. Frank Cook, "The Blessings of Providence on an Association of Archivists," *American Archivist* 46 (Fall 1983): 379.

these characteristics were especially applicable to the decade immediately succeeding 1960. As for much of American society as a whole, the 1960s were a time of particular challenge for SAA. In considering this period, Frank Cook remarked,

The ferment for change in the social structure reached SAA as both leaders and the general membership sought ways to democratize the society and make it more responsive to the needs of its members. . . . Members wanted a newsletter and wanted the *American Archivist* to be more timely and more useful to both practitioners and scholars.⁵

Philip Mason also clearly recognized and acknowledged the significance of the 1960s, both in his 1971 Presidential Address⁶ and particularly in the "Report of the Committee of the 1970's," in 1972.⁷ The latter, a landmark in the development of SAA, presented a number of crucial recommendations for the association, including organizational structure and operations, relations with other professional groups and organizations, the SAA committee system, membership relations and development, education and training, and research and publications. The report recommended that the *American Archivist*

should be expanded in scope and content to reflect more fully the professional interests of all of the Society membership, both in America and overseas; the style of the journal should continually change as the archivist's professional interests and involvements extend into other fields; and the journal should encourage contributions from other disciplines which have an interest in the archival profession.⁸

In the twenty-two years since the tabling of this report, SAA has attempted to achieve many of these recommendations as well as new ones that have arisen as part of a continuing commitment to an on-going planning process. Major follow-up reports have included *Planning for the Archival Profession: A Report of the SAA Task Force on Goals and Priorities*, published in 1986,⁹ and *An Action Agenda for the Archival Profession: Institutionalizing the Planning Process*, in 1988.¹⁰

Like SAA as a whole, the *American Archivist* also underwent a number of changes, both large and small, during these years. The most obvious was the 1981 move from Washington, D.C., and the end of the long-term joint publishing of the journal by SAA and the National Archives. Other clearly visible changes included the physical appearance of the publication itself and several modifications in the internal layout and organization of the contents. However, although the appearance, disappearance, or reorganization of departments and features are simple to detect, characterizing the extent to which specific aspects of the items actually published changed or remained stable over the twenty years is not so easily accomplished, particularly in terms of subject and authorship. Given this difficulty, the present study was conducted using the following methodology.

Methodology

The analysis began by identifying the formally stated purpose and scope of the *American Archivist* and any important changes in this purpose and scope in the twenty years between 1971 and 1990. The

⁵Cook, "Blessings," 397.

⁶Philip P. Mason, "The Society of American Archivists at the Crossroads," *American Archivist* 35 (January 1972): 5-11.

⁷Mason, "Society of American Archivists in the Seventies."

⁸Mason, "Society of American Archivists in the Seventies," 203.

⁹*Planning for the Archival Profession: A Report of the SAA Task Force on Goals and Priorities* (Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 1986).

¹⁰Donn C. Neal, "An Action Agenda for the Archival Profession: Institutionalizing the Planning Process," *American Archivist* 51 (Fall 1988): 528-35.

1971 volume contained no direct statement of editorial policy in terms of the types and subjects of the articles that would be considered for publication, but in a 1972 "Note From the Editor," Edward Weldon stated the following:

the *American Archivist* will carry the best available contemporary writing, both theoretical and practical, on the several areas of archival administration and, when possible, will present historical examinations of archival practices, institutions, and documents. The quarterly will both satisfy the daily needs of the trade and remind archivists of their professional heritage and their ethical responsibilities in an era marked by rapid change. That is, it will offer this diet if archivists care to think and write about these things.¹¹

In 1989, editor David Klaassen commented, "Our aim continues to be that of presenting and stimulating the best thinking on archival issues, of analyzing the contexts and relationships that shape recorded information and its use, and of reporting various activities and developments within, or relevant to, the profession."¹² By 1990, the editorial policy stated that the

American Archivist . . . seeks to reflect thinking about theoretical and practical developments in the archival profession, particularly in North America; about the relationships between archivists and the creators and users of archives; and about cultural, social, legal and technological developments that affect the nature of recorded information and the need to create and maintain it.¹³

Apart from slight changes in phrasing, the overall editorial goals have remained

essentially unchanged: to publish high-quality articles of interest to archivists. This contrasts somewhat with the 1972 recommendation that the journal "should be expanded in scope and content to reflect more fully the professional interests of all of Society membership."¹⁴ However, the editorial policy remained sufficiently general throughout the period so that it could, and did in fact, accommodate considerable variation in the contents of the journal.

This was confirmed by an examination of the actual emphasis and coverage of the *American Archivist* on an issue-to-issue and volume-to-volume basis for the years between 1971 and 1990. In the first 1971 issue, the journal contained, in addition to five articles, sections titled "Reviews of Books," "Abstracts of Foreign Periodicals," "Technical Notes," and "News Notes." By 1990, all of these sections had been eliminated or revised and replaced with such sections as "Perspectives," "Case Studies," "International Scene," "Reviews," "Review Essays," "The Society of American Archivists," and "Forum." As noted, this transition was accomplished within the same basic overall editorial policy.

Given this considerable variety of items found within the covers of the journal over the twenty years, and given the need to provide a relatively homogeneous set of items for analysis, the decision was made to limit the current study to major or feature articles. Based on differences in authorship characteristics, the decision was also made to exclude task force or committee reports, such as those in the special Fall 1989 issue on descriptive standards and the sections of the Winter 1990 issue concerning the works in progress background papers of the Working Group on Standards for Archival Description. Other types of items published

¹¹Edward Weldon, "Note From the Editor," *American Archivist* 35 (January 1972): 150.

¹²David Klaassen, "From the Editor," *American Archivist* 52 (Winter 1989): 4-6.

¹³"Editorial Policy," *American Archivist* 53 (Fall 1990): 179-80.

¹⁴Mason, "Society of American Archivists in the Seventies," 203.

in the journal were likewise excluded from analysis. A future investigation of these items could supplement the data provided by the present study and provide a more detailed view of the total contents and authorship of the journal.

For each article, data were recorded on its year and length; whether it was originally a conference paper; whether it was originally written in a language other than English; its primary subject, number of authors, and type of authorship; and the name, gender, geographic location, and type of position for each of the first two authors.

Findings

For the period 1971 through 1990, 390 unique articles were identified. These included 226 original articles (57.9%) and 164 articles that originated as conference papers (42.1%), the large majority of which were drawn from SAA annual meetings. Assignment of an article to the conference papers category was based on information in the "About the Author" section of the article. Since it is possible, particularly for papers not delivered at SAA meetings, that an author could have submitted an article derived from a conference paper without informing the *American Archivist*, these figures may not be exact.

In the past an assumption existed, at least on the part of some writers, that the majority of articles published in the *American Archivist* were originally SAA conference papers.¹⁵ Although it was impossible to verify this assumption for the period from 1938 to 1970 without gathering additional data, the data generated for the current study showed that for 1971 through 1990 such an assumption would be incorrect. In only five of the twenty years (1975, 1977, 1981, 1983, and 1989) did conference papers of

any type represent 50 percent or more of the total articles published in a given year. For this twenty-year period, the pattern of each of the two types of articles (as a percentage of the total number of articles published in a given year) varied slightly from year to year, but no overall pattern was discernible in the variations. In 1971, for example, original articles accounted for 70.6 percent of the articles published that year. In 1982, the figure was 71.4 percent, and in 1988, it was 70 percent.

The number of individual articles published in a given year ranged from lows of 10 in 1989 and 8 in 1990 (due to the exclusion of sections of the special descriptive standards issues from the analysis), to a high of 28 in 1982, with an overall average of 19.5 articles per volume. The data indicated that there was no general pattern for a relatively larger or smaller number of articles per issue over the twenty years. The average length of articles was 11.1 pages, with a median of 10 pages. The production of several theme issues on topics such as business archives, appraisal, ethnic archives, the role of women, New England archives, description, and two special issues on automation provided readers with special opportunities to consider topics in depth and from several perspectives, which directly met the recommendation of the SAA "Report of the Committee of the 1970's," to address more fully the diverse needs and interests of the membership.¹⁶ During the period analyzed, only 4 articles were identified in the journal as translations from non-English-language sources.

Subjects of articles. The scope of the domain of knowledge claimed by a profession is a major factor in establishing the legitimacy and intellectual strength of that profession. "The quality of archival knowledge is mainly attributable to the lit-

¹⁵Mabel E. Deutrich, "Women in Archives: Ms. versus Mr. Archivist," *American Archivist* 36 (April 1973): 178-79.

¹⁶Mason, "Society of American Archivists in the Seventies," 203.

erature that defines, debates, and refines the profession's practices and the reasons for these practices."¹⁷ The analysis of a professional journal's subject coverage, or of a profession's literature as a whole, provides a means of identifying the parameters and boundaries of that profession's domain. It delineates those topics of continuing interest to the profession in general and, more particularly, to the readers of the journal, at least in terms of what is actually published. For the present study, working from the stated intention of the *American Archivist* "to reflect thinking about theoretical and practical developments in the archival profession,"¹⁸ an analysis of the primary subject of articles was undertaken.¹⁹

The actual number of existing subject-based analyses of the archival literature is limited, but a number of noteworthy studies have been reported. Richard Cox, as

part of a 1983 investigation of the literature of American archival history, found that topic has been significantly underrepresented in the general archival literature.²⁰ Gordon Dodds, also using a qualitative design, examined the Canadian archival literature, giving particular attention to the role of *Archivaria*. His article, originally prepared as an address to SAA in 1981, considered not only subject content but several other aspects of the Canadian archival literature.²¹ Peter Wosh, as part of a study of the education and training of archivists, identified and examined relevant articles published in the *American Archivist* on American archival history.²² Frank Burke also analyzed the *American Archivist* on the topic of education and found that between 1938 and 1982, twenty-two articles on archival education were published, while the topic of arrangement and description accounted for fifty-five articles during the same period. This provided support for his contention that there was a distinct lack of interest in archival education, at least among the leaders of SAA.²³

In 1987, Richard Cox again considered the professional literature, developing a combined qualitative and quantitative design to analyze the archival literature published between 1942 and 1981 and cited in the annual bibliographies printed in the *American Archivist* during that period. He found that the categories "Arrangement and Description of Records and Manuscripts," and "Repositories: History, Organization, and Activities" together accounted for 50.9

¹⁷Cox, "American Archival Literature," 307.

¹⁸"Editorial Policy," *American Archivist* 53 (Fall 1990): 179–80.

¹⁹While considerable research has taken place on the gatekeeping roles of referees, editors, and editorial boards of professional journals in the determination of what articles and topics are actually published, such a consideration was beyond the scope of the present study. If such a study were to be undertaken it could investigate the extent of the impact these individuals and the refereeing process in general have on the professional archival literature, including but certainly not restricted to the *American Archivist*. See, for example, Von Bakanic, Clark McPhail, and Rita J. Simon, "The Manuscript Review and Decision-making Process," *American Sociological Review* 52 (1987): 631–42; Donna M. Johnson and Duane H. Roen, "Complimenting and Involvement in Peer Reviews: Gender Variation," *Language in Society* 21 (March 1992): 27–57; Herbert W. Marsh and Samuel Ball, "The Peer Review Process Used to Evaluate Manuscripts Submitted to Academic Journals: Interjudgmental Reliability," *Journal of Experimental Education* 57 (Winter 1989): 151–69; Michael McGiffert, "Is Justice Blind? An Inquiry into Peer Review," *Scholarly Publishing* 20 (October 1988): 43–48; Benjamin D. Singer, "The Critical Crisis of the Academic World," *Sociological Inquiry* 59 (1989): 127–43; Jane Smith, "Refereeing," *Learned Publishing* 3 (January 1990): 19–25; and Ann C. Weller, "Potential Bias in Editorial Peer Review: A Study of U.S. Medical Journals," *Serials Librarian* 19 (1991): 95–103.

²⁰Richard J. Cox, "American Archival History: Its Development, Needs and Opportunities," *American Archivist* 46 (Winter 1983): 31–41.

²¹Gordon Dodds, "Canadian Archival Literature: A Bird's-Eye View," *Archivaria* 17 (Winter 1983–1984): 18–40.

²²Peter J. Wosh, "Creating a Semiprofessional Profession: Archivists View Themselves," *Georgia Archivist* 10 (Fall 1982): 1–13.

²³Frank G. Burke, "Archival Cooperation," *American Archivist* 46 (Summer 1983): 302.

percent of the body of archival literature, at least in terms of that cited in the annual bibliographies.²⁴ More recently, Cox investigated the archival literature concerned with archival reference for the period 1980 to 1990, in which he identified seventeen major papers dealing with the topic and compared them to similar papers from the library and information studies literature.²⁵ Fredric Miller, in a study of sixteen American social history journals, characterized both the journals and the citations to 214 selected articles in the journals by subject.²⁶ Library and information studies, as well as other professional and discipline-based literatures, have also been the focus of studies concerned with subject content.²⁷

Typically, such studies have employed largely quantitative methodologies, with the investigation of subject content providing a partial means of defining the interests of the profession and the scope of its professional domain. Without the methodological and analytical rigor provided by such studies, whether based on qualitative or quantitative designs, members of a profession or discipline typically have no direct means of determining the topics of major interest to the profession or the discipline, other

than a highly subjective and impressionistic assessment.

The chief difficulty associated with the analysis of a professional literature's subject domain is the establishment of an authority or heading list that can be used as a basis for the classification of individual items. This presents a fundamental problem because the creation of the subject categories themselves can be quite problematic and will have major implications in regard to the phenomenon of data scatter. Data scatter occurs when a large number of highly precise subject headings are used and, at the conclusion of the data analysis, the analyst is confronted with many subject categories, each of which may have only a few cases. Unless the number of items being analyzed is quite large, discerning trends or patterns in the subject coverage can be very difficult. For example, if fifty articles were being coded, and a list of twenty-five headings were used, the data for the articles would be widely scattered over the twenty-five headings unless a relatively large number of the articles happened to concern the same topic. Data interpretation could then become very impressionistic.

Various strategies have been adopted in previous studies to contend with the problem of data scatter. In an analysis of the library literature, Stephen Atkins created and used a list of 58 headings to classify 2,705 articles by subject.²⁸ Lois Buttlar, who was also concerned with the library literature, compiled a list of 130 subject headings to code 1,725 articles.²⁹ In both the Atkins and the Buttlar studies, the large number of articles made it feasible to use a relatively extensive subject heading list. By way of contrast, the classification of a large number of articles using a quite limited list of headings has also been reported. Mar-

²⁴Cox, "American Archival Literature," 320-21.

²⁵Richard J. Cox, "Researching Archival Reference as an Information Function: Observations on Needs and Opportunities," *RQ* 31 (Spring 1992): 388.

²⁶Fredric Miller, "Use, Appraisal, and Research: A Case Study of Social History," *American Archivist* 49 (Fall 1986): 379.

²⁷See, for example, Stephen E. Atkins, "Subject Trends in Library and Information Science Research, 1975-1984," *Library Trends* 36 (Spring 1988): 633-58; Lois Buttlar, "Analyzing the Library Periodical Literature: Content and Authorship," *College and Research Libraries* 52 (January 1991): 38-53; Sisko Kumpulainen, "Library and Information Science Research in 1975: Content Analysis of the Journal Articles," *Libri* 41 (March 1991): 59-76; and Patricia E. Feehan et al., "Library and Information Science Research: An Analysis of the 1984 Journal Literature," *Library and Information Science Research* 9 (1987): 173-85.

²⁸Atkins, "Subject Trends," 636.

²⁹Buttlar, "Analyzing the Library Periodical Literature," 47-48.

tyvonne Nour found 9 subject categories adequate to analyze 1,404 articles from core library journals.³⁰

Another related technique involves using not only a pre-existing subject heading list but also a previously established assignment of individual items to one or more of the subject headings on the list. Using the headings, and their linked articles, found in two cumulative indexes to the journal, Alvin Schrader was able to analyze the subject content of the *Journal of Education for Librarianship*.³¹ Richard Cox used a similar approach in 1987, when he adapted the heading lists and references used in the annual bibliographies published in the *American Archivist*.³²

Given the relatively small number of 390 articles, the present study used a variation of the technique developed by Cox, adopting the headings in the 1972 "Annual Bibliography" for a total of 10 broad subject categories.³³ This design provided a reasonable approach in that it allowed for the categorization of articles by their broad overall subject content and also made it simpler to compare the results with those found by Cox.³⁴ The categories used in the

present study were "Appraisal and Disposition of Records and Manuscripts," "Use of Archives and Historical Manuscripts," "Arrangement and Description of Records and Manuscripts," "Automation," "Education, Training and Professional Development," "General Literature," "Historical Editing and Documentary Publication," "Preservation, Restoration, and Storage of Records and Historical Manuscripts," and "Repositories (History, Organization and Activities)." This list differed slightly from that used by Cox; his categories "Management of Current Records," "Application of Photographic Processes to Work with Records and Historical Manuscripts," and "Special Physical Types of Records and Historical Manuscripts" were not used, but the category "Automation" was added. Also unlike the Cox study, this study individually analyzed each of the 390 articles as to its primary subject rather than using the assignment found in the annual bibliographies. (This was necessary because the bibliographies were not available for the entire period covered by the study.) Since it is the rule rather than the exception that articles in professional journals deal with multiple topics, the assignment of a single heading was necessarily somewhat subjective and arbitrary. Nonetheless, as a general indicator of subject focus, this method provided an acceptable level of detail. As a means of establishing reliability, the category chosen for an article in an annual bibliography (if available) was cross-checked with the category to which the same article was assigned in the present study.

³⁰Martyvonne M. Nour, "A Quantitative Analysis of the Research Articles Published in Core Library Journals of 1980," *Library and Information Science Research* 7 (1985): 261-73. See also Marilyn Karenbrock, "A History and Analysis of Top of the News," *Journal of Youth Services in Libraries* 1 (Fall 1987): 29-43; Tim LaBorie and Michael Halperin, "Citation Patterns in Library Science Dissertations," *Journal of Education for Librarianship* 16 (1976): 271-83; and Bulma C. Peritz, "Research in Library Science as Reflected in the Core Journals of the Profession: A Quantitative Analysis (1950-1975)," Ph.D. diss., University of California, Berkeley, 1977.

³¹Alvin M. Schrader, "A Bibliometric Analysis of JEL, 1960-1984," *Journal of Education for Library and Information Science* 25 (Spring 1985): 290.

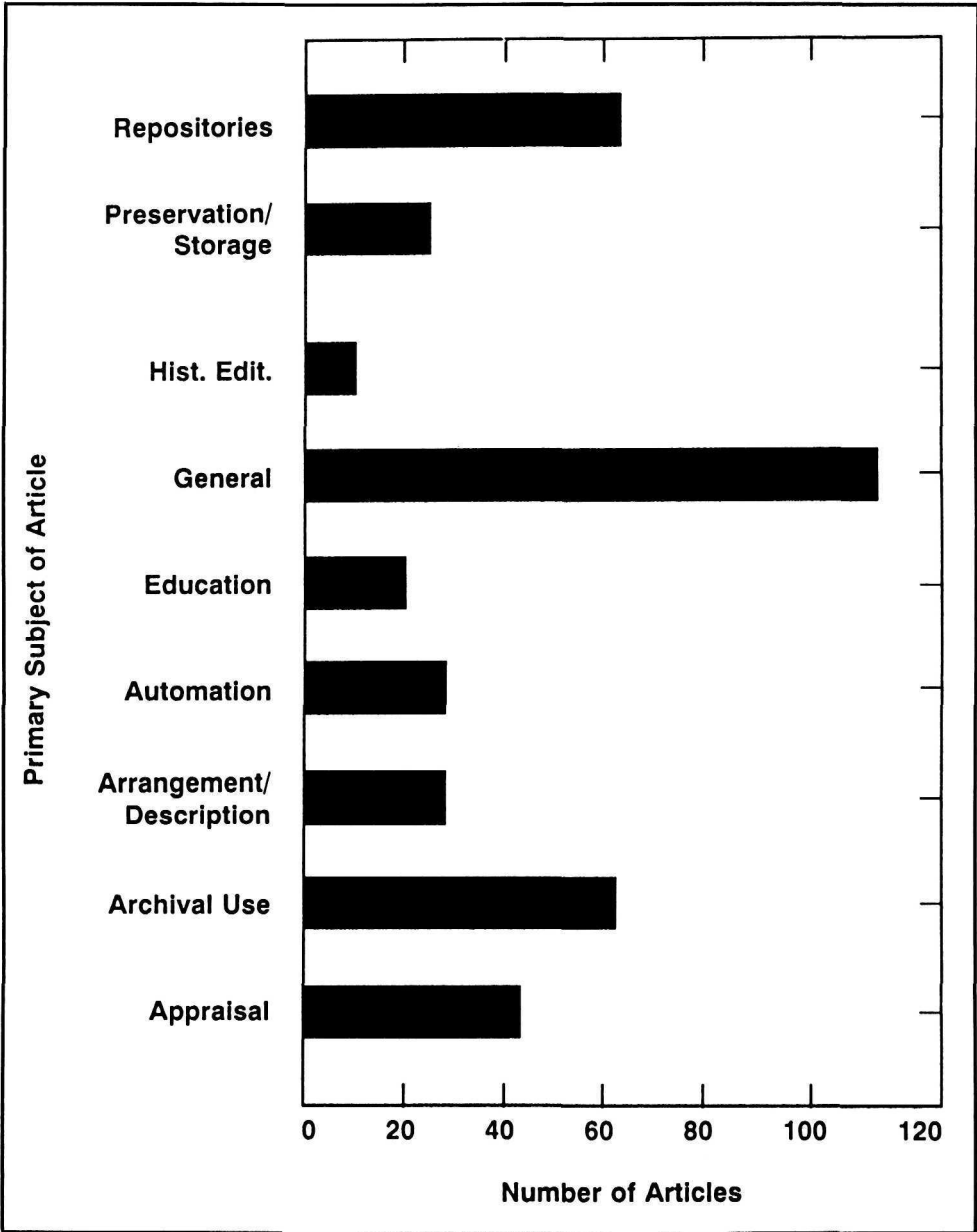
³²Cox, "American Archival Literature," 320-21.

³³"Bibliography: Writings on Archives, Current Records, and Historical Manuscripts, 1970," *American Archivist* 35 (July-October 1972): 378-79.

³⁴From the perspective of an individual attempting to locate relevant articles on precise topics, a scheme with only 10 headings is much too broad to be of any

significant help for retrieval purposes; the overall level of precision is simply too low. This specific problem was acknowledged in the Fall 1990 issue of the *American Archivist*, when for the 1988 annual bibliography the former subject categorization scheme was abandoned. Instead, all items were classified into two broad categories, with subject access provided by a separate detailed multi-level index. See "Writings on Archives: 1988," *American Archivist* 53 (Fall 1990): 588.

Figure 1. Subject Distribution of Articles, 1971 to 1990



For 1971 to 1990, the “General Literature” category, with a total of 110 (28.4%), accounted for the largest number of articles published in the *American Archivist* (see

figure 1). This contrasted strikingly with Cox’s finding that that category was responsible for only 9 percent of the total body of archival literature for the period

1942 to 1981.³⁵ As used in the annual bibliographies, the "General Literature" category included bibliographies, general studies, manuals, terminologies, personnel, and professional and program promotion organization.³⁶ One factor that undoubtedly influenced the degree of variation between Cox's data and that of the current study was that while he was concerned with the archival literature as a whole, the current study was limited to a single type of submission to a single journal: feature articles in the *American Archivist*. This meant, for example, that because *American Archivist* sections such as "Case Studies" were excluded from the present study, some of the more applied and localized literature in Cox's study were not included in the present study.

Cox noted that for the period he studied, "the preponderance of writing by the archival community were finding aids and reports of institutional activities, which largely avoided the more difficult, theoretical issues."³⁷ Clearly, at least for the *American Archivist*, this was not the case for 1970 to 1991. During these two decades the *American Archivist* devoted a substantial proportion of its pages to considerations of the profession itself, including the concepts of professionalism, research needs, and SAA and other professional associations, all of which fell within the parameters of the "General Literature" category. The figures for the last year Cox studied indicated that perhaps this same concern with the profession could well have also begun to be a stronger focus throughout archival literature as a whole. He found that by 1981 the General Literature category accounted for 19.3 percent of the total archival literature, an increase of 18.1 percent from a

level of 1.2 percent of the total literature in 1942 to 1943.³⁸

An additional perspective on the distribution of articles by subject area is given in table 1,³⁹ where the data are distributed over two-year time spans (see page 548). For the present study, the "General Literature" category (110; 28.4%) was followed by a tie between "Use of Archives and Historical Manuscripts," and "Repositories (History, Organization and Activities)," each of which had a total of 63 articles (16.3%). As used in the annual bibliographies, "Use of Archives and Historical Manuscripts" included principles and techniques, policies governing access and use, reproduction, and application of automation to control and use of archives and manuscripts. For the purposes of the present study, articles dealing with archival automation were assigned to a separate category. "Repositories" included geographic areas, religious organizations, and other nongovernment organizations.

As was the case for the "General Literature" category, the pattern described by Cox for these two subject categories for the archival literature as a whole for 1942 to 1981 differed from that in the *American Archivist* for 1971 to 1990. He determined that "Arrangement and Description of Records and Manuscripts" accounted for 26.1 percent of the total body of archival literature, as compared with the 16.3 percent for the *American Archivist*. Unlike the case of the "General Literature," in both the

³⁵Cox, "American Archival Literature," 320-21.

³⁶"Bibliography: Writings on Archives, 1970," 378-79.

³⁷Cox, "American Archival Literature," 311.

³⁸Cox, "American Archival Literature," 320-21.

³⁹It should be noted that, in table 1, the total number of articles for 1989 to 1990 was considerably lower than previous years due to the exclusion from the analysis of the task force and committee reports in the special Fall 1989 issue on descriptive standards and the sections of the Winter 1990 issue concerning the works in progress background papers of the Working Group on Standards for Archival Description. The decision to exclude these items was based on important differences in authorship characteristics.

Table 1. Primary Subjects of *American Archivist* Articles, 1971 to 1990

	71-72	73-74	75-76	77-78	79-80	81-82	83-84	85-86	87-88	89-90	Total
<i>Appraisal</i>	0	0	4	4	4	3	7	10	10	2	44
<i>Archival Use</i>	4	5	13	12	6	3	8	6	4	2	63
<i>Arrangement/ Description</i>	2	4	1	5	2	6	1	3	1	3	28
<i>Automation</i>	2	1	2	1	5	3	7	3	2	1	27
<i>Education</i>	2	0	0	5	2	2	1	0	8	0	20
<i>General Literature</i>	9	17	13	7	8	17	11	11	12	5	110
<i>Historical Editing</i>	1	1	2	2	2	0	1	1	0	0	10
<i>Preservation/ Storage</i>	1	3	5	7	1	2	2	1	0	3	25
<i>Repositories</i>	11	11	6	4	5	12	3	6	3	2	63
Total	32	42	46	47	35	48	41	41	40	18	390

American Archivist and the general literature the relative percentages of this subject category remained relatively stable for each of the time periods analyzed. In neither case did this category of articles show any strong pattern toward either an overall increase or decrease. The category "Repositories (History, Organization and Activities)" had the same number of *American Archivist* articles as did "Arrangement and Description" (63; 16.2%) and similarly did not show any clear pattern of change for either the Cox data or that of the current study.⁴⁰

"Appraisal and Disposition of Records and Manuscripts" accounted for 11.3 percent of the articles published in the *American Archivist*, whereas Cox found that for 1942 to 1981 it was responsible for only 3.1 percent of archival literature in general.⁴¹ Unlike the subject categories discussed previously, the percentage of items associated with appraisal for the larger professional literature displayed a general overall pattern of *decrease* for the period 1942 to 1981, whereas for 1971 to 1990 in the *American Archivist* this same category showed a general *increase* in the number of articles per two-year period. Much of this change resulted from an increase in the number of articles concerned with general theoretical issues, rather than from an increase in the number of articles concerned with descriptions of particular appraisal projects.

Given the differences between the earlier data generated by Cox and that of the current study, it would be useful to extend Cox's earlier analysis of the annual bibliographies for the period after 1981 in order to determine if the difference in emphasis between the larger professional literature and the *American Archivist* continued subsequent to that date, and if so, what factors were important in the difference. A modi-

fied design could also be created that would extend the analysis to the current form of the annual bibliographies.

Authors. In the past, a number of researchers have undertaken surveys of members of the archival profession as a whole, or at least of the members of SAA.⁴² Such analyses have provided an objective overview of selected aspects of the archival profession, through the consideration of such variables as salary, gender, types of positions and institutions, geographic distribution, and education. Although studies of this type can successfully provide an overview of the broad base of the profession, or of subsets of the profession, they typically do not provide data specifically concerned with those individuals who actively contribute to the professional literature. It is feasible to narrow the focus to these individuals by restricting the analysis to the contributors to a given journal, a group of journals, or some other component of the literature.

Researchers in a number of other fields, particularly library and information studies, have examined various authorship characteristics of professional literatures.⁴³ A few relatively rare studies of this general

⁴²See David Bearman, "1982 Survey of the Archival Profession," *American Archivist* 46 (Spring 1983): 233-41; Paul Conway, "Perspectives on Archival Resources: The 1988 Census of Archival Institutions," *American Archivist* 50 (Spring 1987): 174-91; Deutrich, "Women in Archives," 171-81; Mabel E. Deutrich and Ben DeWhitt, "Survey of the Archival Profession, 1979," *American Archivist* 43 (Fall 1980): 527-35; Frank B. Evans and Robert M. Warner, "American Archivists and Their Society: A Composite View," *American Archivist* 34 (April 1971): 157-72; Philip P. Mason and William T. Alderson, "Economic Status of the Archival Profession, 1965-66," *American Archivist* 30 (January 1967): 171-81; and Ernst Posner, "What, Then, is the American Archivist, This New Man," *American Archivist* 20 (January 1957): 4-6.

⁴³See, for example, Buttlar, "Analyzing the Library Periodical Literature"; Richard Hart et al., "Funded and Non-funded Research: Characteristics of Authorship and Patterns of Collaboration in the 1986 Library And Information Science Literature," *Library and Information Science Research* 12 (January-March 1990): 72-86.

⁴⁰Cox, "American Archival Literature," 320-21.

⁴¹Cox, "American Archival Literature," 320-21.

type have been also been undertaken using the professional archival literature, particularly for studies concerned with female archivists. As part of a special *American Archivist* issue on women, Joanna Schneider Zangrando reported on the extent to which women contributed papers to the annual meetings of the Organization of American Historians and the American Historical Association for 1966 to 1972, but she did not consider female members of SAA.⁴⁴ Michele Pacifico, in a 1987 *American Archivist* article, did choose to examine the roles of women in SAA, including the extent to which they authored *American Archivist* articles and book reviews.⁴⁵

Excepting studies in which data are gathered using a qualitative design, it is methodologically much simpler to record data for only the first author of each article. Such an approach has been widely used, but this technique eliminates any possibility of considering the participation of additional authors. In recognition of this problem, and to allow the determination of the relative participation of male and female first and second authors, the present study included both the first and second authors of the articles published in the *American Archivist* between 1971 and 1990. Because only 4.4 percent of the articles had more than two authors, demographic data were gathered on 95.6 percent of all the authors. Analyzed variables included gender, name, geographic location, and type of position.

For the 390 articles, there were a total of 433 authors. These 433 represented 298 different individuals, in that 69 people authored more than one article. Between 1971

and 1990, eight individuals wrote five or more *American Archivist* articles: Francis X. Blouin, Frank Boles, Maynard Brichford, J. Frank Cook, Richard J. Cox, Frank B. Evans, Gerald Ham, and Trudy H. Peterson. In contrast, the large majority of individuals (229; 77%) authored only one article during the period.

Gender of authors. The extent to which women participate in SAA, and indeed in the archival profession as a whole, has been a matter of long-standing concern and analysis. Mabel Deutch, as part of a special 1973 *American Archivist* issue on women in archives, found that approximately 66 percent of female SAA members had never published anything, whereas approximately 43 percent of the male SAA members had never published.⁴⁶ In a 1984 *American Archivist* article, Jacqueline Goggin, while analyzing the data for women gathered as part of the "1982 SAA Survey on the Archival Profession," found that, "women are not as professionally active as men. They do not participate in annual meetings as often, do not publish as much, and do not serve on committees as often."⁴⁷ Michele Pacifico determined that between 1938 and 1972, women accounted for 13.9 percent of the authors of *American Archivist* articles. She also found that for the same period, women were responsible for 17.2 percent of the book reviews in the journal. Based on her observation that for the 1970s the percentage of female members of SAA was approximately 33 percent, it is clear that women's contributions to the journal were not proportionate to their level of membership in the society. In addition to analyzing the number of the *American Archivist* articles written by women authors, she also used additional sources to

⁴⁴Joanna Schneider Zangrando, "An Historian's View on the Liberation of Clio," *American Archivist* 50 (April 1973): 212.

⁴⁵Michele F. Pacifico, "Founding Mothers: Women in the Society of American Archivists, 1936-1972," *American Archivist* 50 (Summer 1987): 370-89.

⁴⁶Deutch, "Women in Archives," 179.

⁴⁷Jacqueline Goggin, "The Feminization of the Archival Profession: An Analysis of the 1982 Salary Survey as It Pertains to Women," *American Archivist* 47 (Summer 1984): 330.

Table 2. Gender of Authors of *American Archivist* Articles, 1971 to 1990

	Men		Women	
	N	Percentage	N	Percentage
1971–72	33	91.7	3	8.3
1973–74	38	79.2	10	20.8
1975–76	39	76.5	12	23.5
1977–78	44	75.9	14	24.1
1979–80	25	69.4	11	30.6
1981–82	30	58.8	21	41.2
1983–84	32	71.1	13	28.9
1985–86	26	59.1	18	40.9
1987–88	30	68.2	14	31.8
1989–90	12	60.0	8	40.4
Total	309	71.4	124	28.6

analyze the total participation of women in different aspects of SAA. She found that “relative to their numbers, women held fewer offices, served on fewer committees, delivered fewer papers, published fewer articles, and received fewer awards than their male counterparts.”⁴⁸

In light of such prior work, and in an attempt to build on their findings, the current study looked at the extent to which women authored articles published in the *American Archivist* from 1971 to 1990. As shown in table 2, of the 433 authors, 124 (28.6%) were women and 309 (71.4%) were men. This relative percentage of women was considerably higher than the 13.9 percent found by Pacifico for the previous thirty-four years. In addition, there was a clear trend toward a general increase in the percentage of women authors for the twenty years analyzed. With the exception of 1983 to 1984 (when it was 28.9%) the percentage of women authors for any two-year period was at least 30 percent for 1979 through 1990, with a high of 52.4 percent in the year 1986. When the data were examined

in terms of the extent to which women contributed original articles and articles derived from conference papers, it was found that for both types of articles the percentage of women was approximately 30 percent, which was very close to their overall level of participation. Of the 388 first authors, 283 (72.9%) were men and 105 (27.1%) were women. Of the total of 45 second authors, 26 (57.8%) were men and 19 (42.2%) were women. These data seemed to indicate clearly that women have assumed a much more active level of participation in SAA, at least in terms of publishing articles in the *American Archivist*, than was apparent for earlier periods of the society or the journal.

Collaboration. Related to the issue of author gender is the issue of author collaboration. As noted by Alvin Schrader, “In most fields of the natural and human sciences, collaboration is taken to be a sign of development and maturity—though one must hasten to add that such collaboration is only a crude indicator of cognitive progress.”⁴⁹ The validity of such a proposition,

⁴⁸Pacifico, “Founding Mothers,” 384.

⁴⁹Schrader, “Bibliometric Analysis of *JEL*,” 291.

together with the entire range of questions associated with the phenomenon of author collaboration, has been the focus of considerable research, particularly in the natural and applied sciences, but also the social sciences.⁵⁰ No such studies have been conducted for the archival literature, but investigations such as the present study can begin to lay the groundwork for more in-depth considerations of the practice in the archival field.

Analysis of the data showed that single authorship was the overwhelming pattern in the *American Archivist* for 1971 to 1990, with almost 90 percent of articles belonging to this category. For the 390 articles, 343 (87.9%) were written by one author, 30 (7.7%) by two authors, and 17 (4.4%) by more than two authors. Although the percentage of articles with one author was quite high for the entire twenty years, for the last thirteen (1978–1990) it was slightly higher than for the first seven years analyzed. During 1971 to 1977, the percentage of single-author articles reached 90 percent only once (1972), whereas during 1978 to 1990 the percentage dipped slightly below 90 percent only twice. For three years, all the articles published had only one author. The highest level of formal collaboration was achieved in 1977, when 44 percent of the articles had two or more authors.

The extent to which men and women coauthored articles was also considered. Of the 387 articles for which the gender of both the first and second authors (if any) could be determined, 273 (70.5%) were

written by men (either singly or in collaboration with other men), 101 (26.1%) by women (either singly or in collaboration with other women), and 13 (3.4%) were collaborative efforts involving both male and female authors. For the 47 articles that had two or more authors, 24 (51.1%) had two male authors, 10 (21.3%) had two female authors, and 13 (27.7%) had a male and a female author. When the data were examined distributed over the twenty years, no pattern of either increasing or decreasing levels of mixed-gender authorship emerged.

In terms of the subjects of articles, 173 (64.5%) of the articles written by men (either singly or in collaboration with other men) fell into the categories "General Literature," "Repositories (History, Organization, and Activities)," and "Use of Archives and Historical Manuscripts." For the articles written by women (either singly or in collaboration with other women), 63 (62.4%) were assigned to the three categories "General Literature," "Use of Archives and Historical Manuscripts," and "Appraisal and Disposition of Records and Manuscripts." The 13 articles identified as having both a male and a female author were distributed fairly evenly across all the categories *except* "Automation," "General Literature," "Historical Editing and Documentary Publication," and "Repositories (History, Organization, and Activities)." Given the small number of multi-author articles, generalizations must be made with considerable care, but overall, the subjects of these mixed-authorship articles did not show any pattern of change over the twenty years analyzed.

The data indicate that the *American Archivist* maintained a generally steady pattern of single authorship for 1971 to 1990. This can be contrasted with analyses of the professional literature of library and information studies, which is generally similar in structure to the professional archival literature. When Paul Metz analyzed the au-

⁵⁰See, for example, M. Bridgestock, "The Quality of Single and Multiple Authored Papers: An Unresolved Problem," *Scientometrics* 21 (January 1991): 37–48; Jin M. Choi, "An Analysis of Authorship in Anthropology Journals, 1963 & 1983," *Behavioral & Social Sciences Librarian* 6 (1988): 85–94; Miranda Lee Pao, "Co-authorship as Communication Measure," *Library Research* 2 (Winter 1980): 327–38; and Gloria J. Zamora and Martha C. Adamson, "Authorship Characteristics in *Special Libraries*: A Comparative Study," *Special Libraries* 73 (April 1982): 100–107.

thorship patterns of the journal *College and Research Libraries* he found there was a steady decline in single-author articles for the period from 1939 to 1988, from a high of 95.7 percent in 1939 to 1944, to a low of 54.1 percent in 1985 to 1988.⁵¹ A similar trend away from single authorship was noted by Alvin Schrader for the *Journal of Education for Librarianship* for the years 1960 to 1984. He found that while there was essentially no collaborative authorship during the early part of this period, by the end, approximately 33 percent of the articles were written by multiple authors.⁵² Given these apparent differences between selected journals from the library and information studies literature and the *American Archivist*, it would be useful for a future study to identify and analyze the factors that have led the *American Archivist* authors to maintain a practice of single authorship during roughly the same time periods. Such a study could consider variables like the impact of professional isolation for archivists working in one-person shops, geographic distribution, influence of authorship patterns in such fields as history and political science, and the influence of institution reward structures and infrastructure support.

Geographic distribution. Several previous surveys of SAA members have attempted to identify and characterize the geographic distribution of the membership, as well as that of archivists who were not members of SAA. For example, the 1979 "Survey of the Archival Profession" organized and reported geographic data for respondents on the basis of regions, such as New England.⁵³ More recently, in 1983 David Bearman analyzed the data generated by the "1982 Survey of the Archival

Profession." Data on the geographic location of respondents were gathered in this study but were not separately reported. Instead they were combined with salary data to categorize compensation by geographic area.⁵⁴ Salary was not a variable of interest in the present study, but the geographic location of authors was analyzed.

Data were gathered on the geographic distribution of all first or second authors of articles in the *American Archivist*. If a given individual wrote three articles, as either first or second author, all three were separately counted. The geographic location of each author was coded, using information available in the *American Archivist*. In the case of the United States, state names were recorded. The names of Canadian provinces were also individually recorded, but for the purposes of data analysis they were collapsed into a single category. The same pattern was also used for countries outside the United States and Canada. As shown in figure 2, for 1971 to 1990, of the 401 authors for whom a geographic location could be determined, 102 (25.4%) worked in the District of Columbia, followed by Massachusetts (34; 8.5%), Michigan (33; 8.2%), and New York (30; 7.5%). Taken together, these four geographic areas accounted for 49.6 percent of *American Archivist* authors. The relative domination of District of Columbia authors throughout the entire period was unmistakable.

Beginning in 1949, the *American Archivist* was published as a cooperative venture by SAA and the National Archives. As noted by J. Frank Cook, the society had directly benefited in a number of important ways from this close relationship with the National Archives since the earliest days of the society's existence.⁵⁵ The significance of the National Archives to SAA was also

⁵¹Paul Metz, "A Statistical Profile of *College and Research Libraries*," 44.

⁵²Schrader, "Bibliometric Analysis of *JEL*," 291.

⁵³Deutrich and DeWhitt, "Survey of the Archival Profession," 529.

⁵⁴Bearman, "1982 Survey of the Archival Profession," 238-39.

⁵⁵Cook, "Blessings," 377-78.

Figure 2. Geographic Distribution of Authors, 1971 to 1990

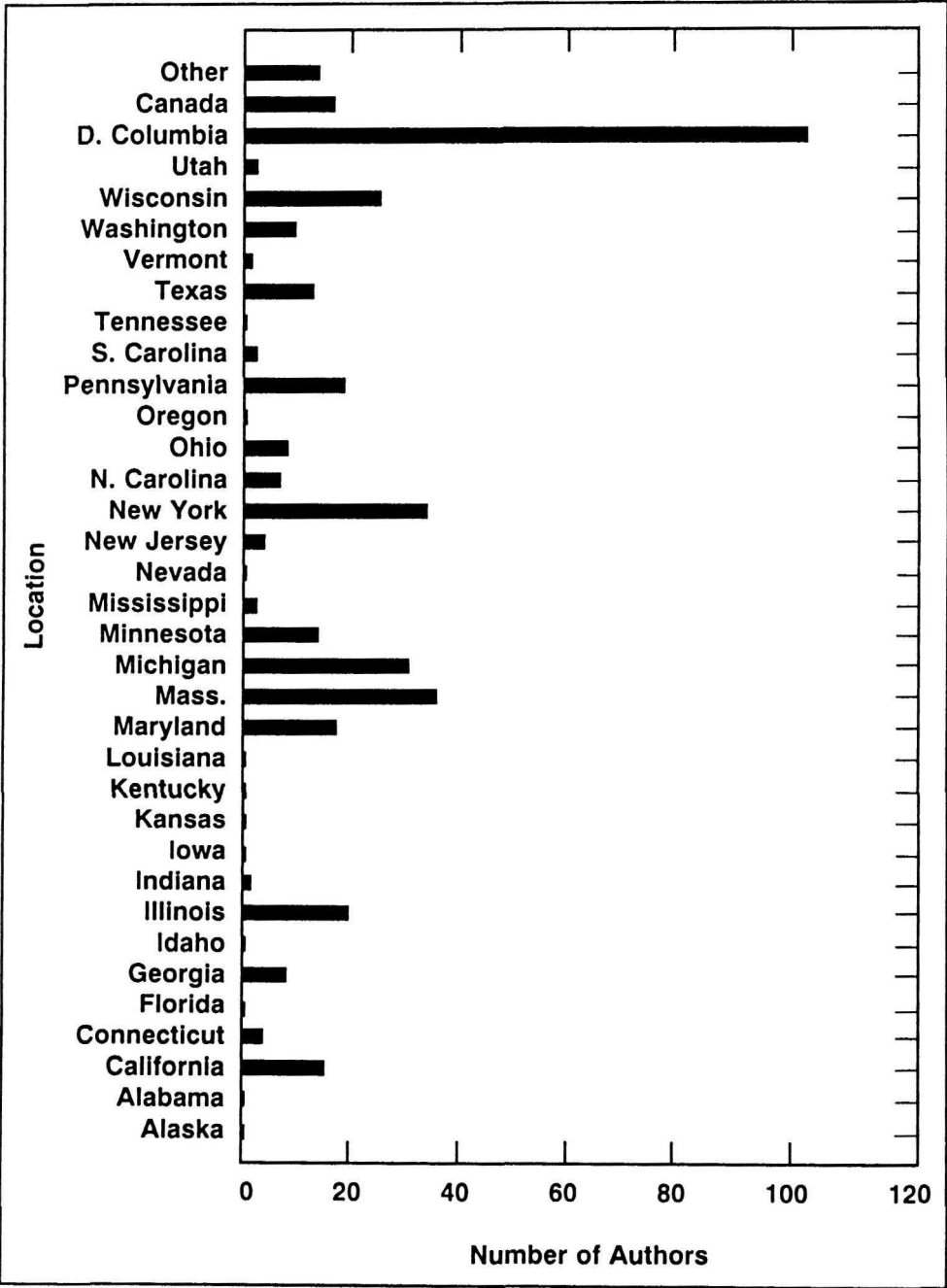
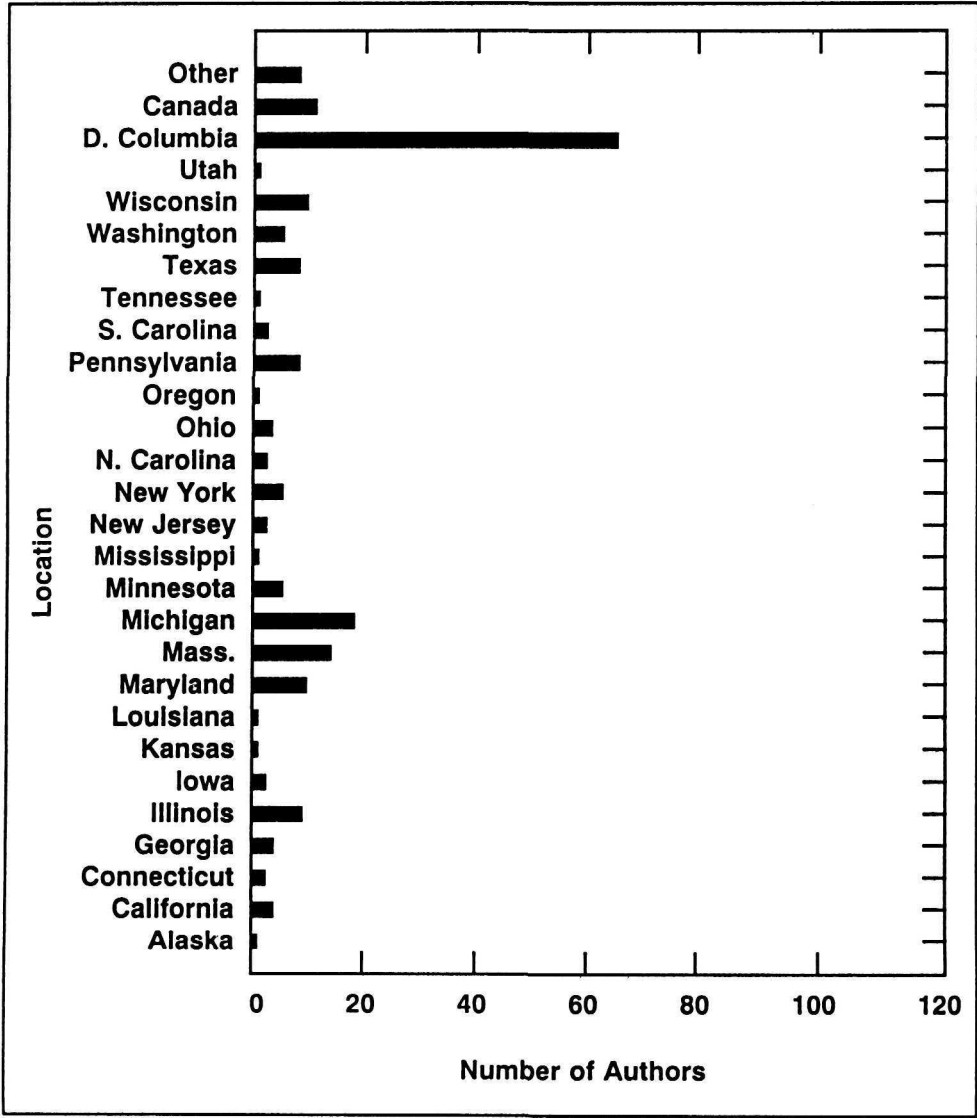


Figure 3. Geographic Distribution of Authors, 1971 to 1980



recognized by Richard Cox in 1987 when he wrote,

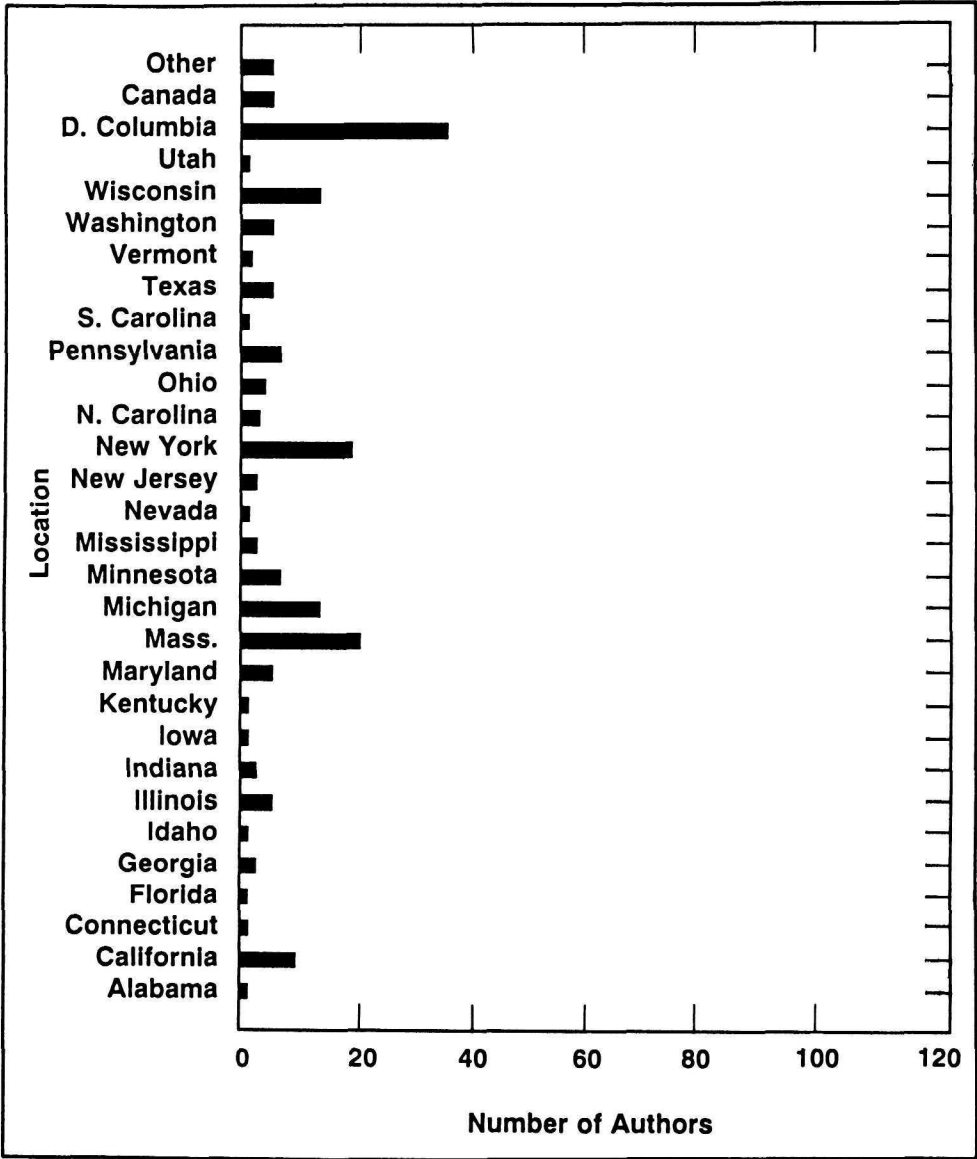
In addition to providing crucial support for SAA's quarterly journal, the National Archives was also fertile ground for other archival writings. . . . Many of the profession's chief principles and practices were born or refined in the heady atmosphere

of the young National Archives.⁵⁶

In 1981, this arrangement ended, following a "cease and desist" order from the administrator of general services, and the *American Archivist* moved outside Wash-

⁵⁶Cox, "American Archival Literature," 310.

Figure 4. Geographic Distribution of Authors, 1981 to 1990



ington, D.C.⁵⁷ In an attempt to determine

⁵⁷Frank H. Mackaman, "From the Editor," *American Archivist* 45 (Winter 1982): 3-4.

whether the relative percentage of authors based in Washington, D.C., was different for the periods before and after the move, the geographic data were re-analyzed, as shown in figures 3 and 4. During the years

1971 to 1980, Washington-based authors accounted for 64 (31.8%) of 201 authors; for 1981 to 1990 they represented only 38 (19.6%) of the 194 published authors, for a 12.2 percent change. For all other geographic areas analyzed, only New York (with an increase of 7.3%) showed more than a 5 percent difference in relative percentages for the two periods. The 12.2 percent difference for Washington, D.C., strongly suggests that the move could have been a significant factor in the observed changes, but it is likely that other factors also played a part. These could have included the strengthening and development of archival repositories of all types outside of the District of Columbia, the development of archival educational programs across the United States and Canada, and SAA efforts to increase the participation and influence of all types of archivists from a wider geographic area, both in the society in general and in the *American Archivist* in particular. An investigation of these and other factors could be the focus of future analysis.

Types of positions. Typically, analyses that characterize the authorship of professional or discipline-based literatures or journals have considered either the types of positions of authors, their institutional affiliations, or both. In the "1982 Survey of the Archival Profession," Bearman reported institutional data for respondents, finding that 44 percent worked in archives, 19 percent in libraries, and 16 percent in manuscript collections, with the remaining 21 percent in a variety of settings.⁵⁸ In contrast, Deutrich, in her examination of the role of women archivists, identified not the type of institutional affiliation but rather the types of positions held by both male and female archivists.⁵⁹ However, neither of these studies, nor other similar archival-based studies, considered the types of po-

sitions or institutional affiliations of archival literature authors.⁶⁰

For the present study, data were gathered on the types of position held by the 431 first and second authors for whom a determination could be made, based on information in the issue in which the article appeared. As shown in figure 5, academic archivists accounted for the largest number of authors, with a total of 95 (22%) *American Archivist* authors. This category included all individuals identified as working in an archival repository associated with a college or university archives, but not those who were identified as librarians or educators. The total for the the *American Archivist* authors was somewhat lower than the total percentage of academic archivists identified in the "1982 Survey of the Archival Profession," which found that approximately 35 percent of the respondents were working in colleges and universities.⁶¹ The second ranked type of position for the current study was federal archivists at 71 (16.5%), which, given the previously noted level of participation by Washington, D.C.-based authors, was not surprising (although, of course, not all archivists based in Washington were federal archivists). The third-highest ranked type of position of the *American Archivist* authors was librarian, with 55 (12.8%) authors.⁶² These three cat-

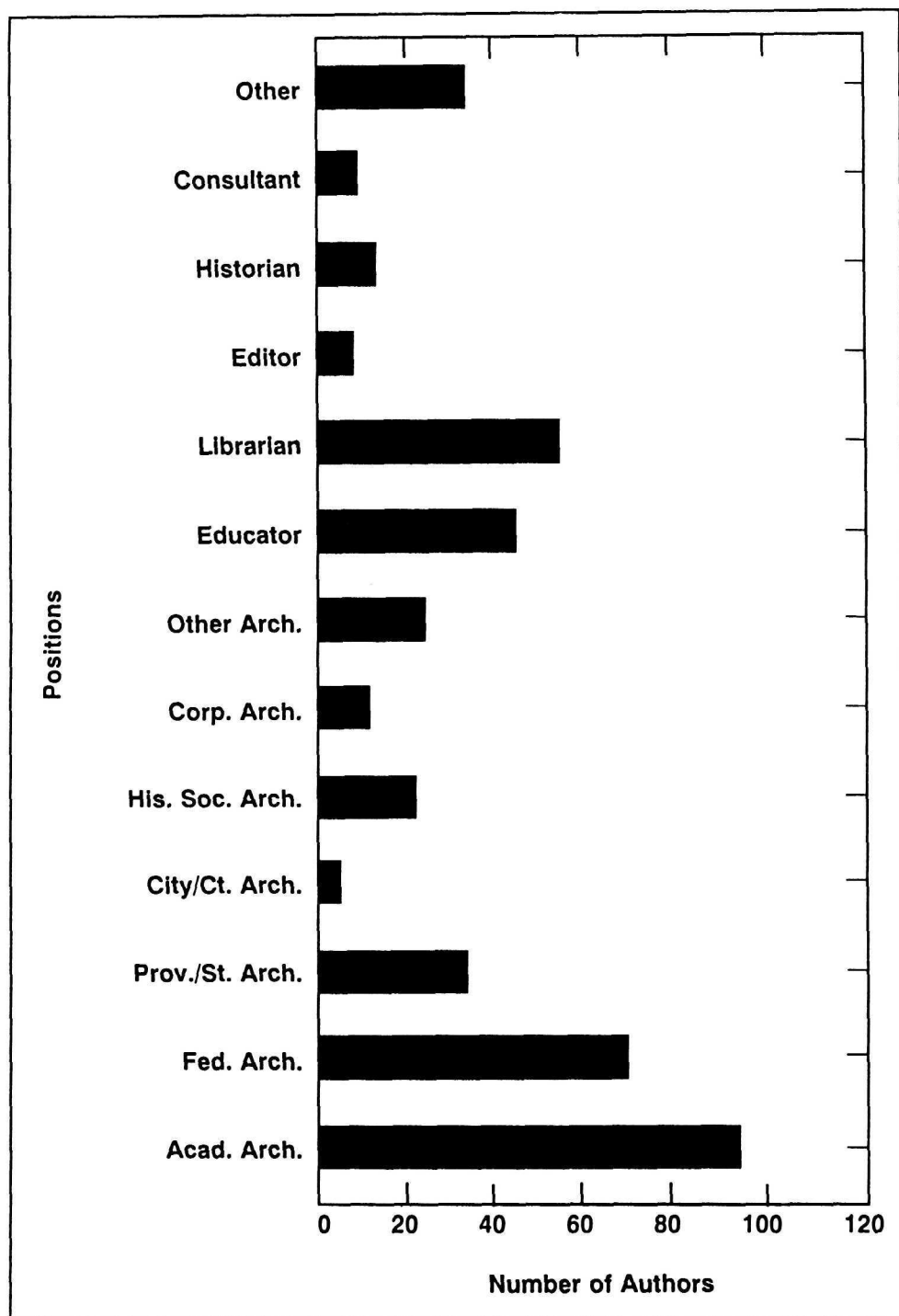
⁶⁰A number of such studies have been undertaken using other professional literatures. See, for example, Kieth Swigger, "Institutional Affiliations of Authors of Research Articles," *Journal of Education for Library and Information Science* 26 (Fall 1985): 105-109; and Carol A. Mularski, "Institutional Affiliations of Authors of Research Articles in Library and Information Science: An Update," *Journal of Education for Library and Information Science* 31 (Winter 1991): 179-86. See also Buttlar, "Analyzing the Library Periodical Literature," 42; Metz, "Statistical Profile," 44; and Schrader, "Bibliometric Analysis of JEL," 291.

⁶¹Bearman, "1982 Survey of the Archival Profession," 237.

⁶²It should be noted that it is probable that several of the individuals coded as librarians were in fact carrying out archival tasks; however, if the individual

⁵⁸Bearman, "1982 Survey of the Archival Profession," 237.

⁵⁹Deutrich, "Women in Archives," 175.

Figure 5. Types of Positions of Authors, 1971 to 1990

egories together accounted for 51.3 percent of the authors.

When the data related to type of position were examined over the period from 1971 to 1990, only one category showed a major change. The percentage of authors who were federal archivists during 1971 to 1980 was 31 percent, whereas for 1981 to 1990, federal archivists accounted for only 13.4 percent of the authors. No other category showed a change larger than 5 percent. As in the case of geographic location, it seemed probable that the split of the *American Archivist* from the National Archives and Washington, D.C., in 1981 was a major factor in this observed change. However, more in-depth research that would consider the influence of additional variables would have to be undertaken before firm conclusions could be drawn.

Research. Providing a forum for the dissemination of research and scholarly writing produced by a profession or discipline is one of the major roles a professional journal such as the *American Archivist* is typically expected to play. In the case of the *American Archivist*, this forum has always explicitly included works from both theoretical and more practical perspectives. This range has not only provided support for archivists looking to the journal for real-world solutions, it has also encouraged the development and exploration of archival theory.

Archival researchers have adopted a variety of qualitative and quantitative research designs and methods derived from

several research traditions, most especially from the historical tradition. A number of writers have urged archival researchers to adopt and adapt appropriate techniques and methods from the social sciences as a means of extending their research efforts. In this regard, Lawrence Dowler urged, "If archivists ever expect to do serious research, and ultimately, develop a meaningful conception of the archival profession, we must stop pretending to be misplaced historians and begin introducing scientific methods and models."⁶³ Although relatively few research articles based on social-scientific designs have appeared in the *American Archivist*, this does not of course imply that the journal has no research tradition. As Richard Cox noted, "literature that is purely descriptive or historical can contribute to the development of a profession's theoretical knowledge."⁶⁴ Nonetheless, most archivists would probably agree that, overall, more research needs to be conducted and then reported and disseminated in forums such as the *American Archivist*.

This need for the archival profession as a whole to produce and communicate research has been a matter of keen interest

⁶³Lawrence Dowler, "The Role of Use in Defining Archival Practice and Principles: A Research Agenda for the Availability and Use of Records," *American Archivist* 51 (Winter-Spring 1988): 77. For additional consideration of the relationship of archivists and historians, see George Bolotenko, "Archivists and Historians: Keepers of the Well," *Archivaria* 16 (Summer 1983): 5-25; George Bolotenko, "Of Ends and Means: In Defence of the Archival Ideal," *Archivaria* 18 (Summer 1984): 241-47; Richard J. Cox, "On the Value of Archival History in the United States," *Libraries and Culture* 23 (Spring 1988): 135-51; "The Debate Over History and Archives," *Archivaria* 17 (Winter 1983-1984): 286-308; Mattie U. Russell, "The Influence of Historians on the Archival Profession in the United States," *American Archivist* 46 (Summer 1983): 277-85; Carl Spadoni, "In Defence of the New Professionalism: A Rejoinder to George Bolotenko," *Archivaria* 19 (Winter 1984-1985): 191-95; and Hugh A. Taylor, "The Discipline of History and the Education of the Archivist," *American Archivist* 40 (October 1977): 395-402.

⁶⁴Cox, "American Archival Literature," 307.

was identified as a librarian or as working in a library without any mention of archives, that author was recorded as a librarian. Likewise, while some individuals coded as either archivists or librarians probably also taught in archival, history, or library and information studies programs, that participation was not reflected in the data unless they were identified as educators. When two position types were given for the same author, available evidence was used to make a judgment as to the primary position and it was so recorded.

and debate in recent years. Specific recognition was given to this issue in *Planning for the Archival Profession: A Report of the SAA Task Force on Goals and Priorities*, which stated, "the Task Force believes the publication and dissemination of information and analysis on archival concerns is of critical importance."⁶⁵ The same report went on to state, "A sustained and coherent program of research and development is essential to the advancement of archives."⁶⁶ As a follow-up to the report, three crucial and far-reaching research agendas were published in the Winter-Spring 1988 issues of the *American Archivist*, each of which emphasized the importance and benefits that the production and dissemination of research could bring to the archival field.⁶⁷ More recently, Margaret Hedstrom commented on the necessity for archivists to address "one of the greatest challenges facing the profession" by establishing and then implementing a research agenda for electronic records.⁶⁸ Former *American Archivist* editor David Klaassen noted the particular role and responsibility of the journal in this process when he wrote, "Research articles, based on original investigation or on systematic review of literature, remain an essential element in the collective effort to advance the profession's ability to understand the issues it faces."⁶⁹

⁶⁵*Planning for the Archival Profession*, 31.

⁶⁶*Planning for the Archival Profession*, 33.

⁶⁷Richard J. Cox and Helen W. Samuels, "The Archivist's First Responsibility: A Research Agenda to Improve the Identification and Retention of Records of Enduring Value," *American Archivist* 51 (Winter-Spring 1988): 28-51; Dowler, "The Role of Use"; and Paul H. McCarthy, "The Management of Archives: A Research Agenda," *American Archivist* 51 (Winter-Spring 1988): 52-72. See also Richard J. Cox, "A Research Agenda for Archival Education in the United States," in *American Archival Analysis: The Recent Development of the Archival Profession in the United States* (Metuchen, N.J.: Scarecrow Press, 1990), 98-112.

⁶⁸Margaret Hedstrom, "Understanding Electronic Incunabula: A Framework for Research on Electronic Records," *American Archivist* 54 (Summer 1991): 334.

⁶⁹David Klaassen, "From the Editor," 4.

It was beyond the scope of the present study to characterize the nature of and the extent to which articles published in the *American Archivist* were based on recognized research methods, whether qualitative, quantitative, or a combination of the two. Such an analysis could help archivists to evaluate more accurately the ways in which the profession, as expressed in the professional literature in general and in the *American Archivist* in particular, is rising to take up the research gauntlets thrown down within the pages of the journal over the last twenty years.⁷⁰

Summary of Findings

In summary, analysis of *American Archivist* articles published in the years 1970 to 1991 revealed a journal that underwent considerable change in some areas but remained quite stable in others. One major identified change occurred in the marked increase in relative participation by women as authors, as compared with earlier analyses of *American Archivist* authors. Change was also observed in the location and type of position of authors. Over the two decades as a whole, academic archivists represented the largest group of authors, followed by federal archivists, librarians, and educators. For the same period, the District of Columbia was the highest-ranked geographic location of authors, distantly followed by Massachusetts, Michigan, New York, and Wisconsin. In the case of both type of position and geographic location, a

⁷⁰For examples of such research in the related field of library and information studies, see Caroline Coughlin and Pamela Snelson, "Searching for Research in ACRL Conference Papers," *Journal of Academic Librarianship* 9 (March 1983): 21-26; Feehan et al., "Library and Information Science Research"; Peritz, "Research in Library Science"; Danny P. Wallace, "The Use of Statistical Methods in Library and Information Science," *Journal of the American Society for Information Science* 26 (November 1985): 402-10; and Nancy Van De Walter et al., "Research in Information Science: An Assessment," *Information Processing and Management* 12 (1976): 117-23.

pattern of redistribution was noted following the separation of the publication of the *American Archivist* from the National Archives in 1981. The relative participation of federal archivists based in the District of Columbia area underwent a notable decline following this separation, as did the relative level of authors who were federal archivists. It is quite likely that not all of the change was due solely to this factor, but additional research will be required to address this point fully.

In other areas, the journal remained quite stable. Data analysis showed that the vast majority of *American Archivist* articles were written by a single author, and this factor showed very little variation over time. This finding contrasted with analyses of similar professional journals from the field of library and information studies, where the relative level of single authorship had shown a pattern of decline in similar time periods. Further research should be undertaken to investigate the nature of author collaboration in the archival profession in general and in the *American Archivist* in particular.

The journal also remained quite stable in terms of the subject focus for articles, with few clear patterns of change observable over the twenty years. The "General Literature" category accounted for the largest number of articles, followed by a tie between "Use of Archives" and "Historical Manuscripts," and "Repositories (History, Organization, and Activities)." Taken to-

gether, these three subject categories accounted for more than 60 percent of the articles. Over the period 1970 to 1991, the *American Archivist* placed considerable emphasis on articles considering the fundamental nature of the archival profession itself, and this was reflected in the large "General Literature" category. "Appraisal and Disposition of Records and Manuscripts" was the fourth-ranked subject category, but, unlike the first three, this category did show a general pattern of increased coverage in 1970 to 1991, primarily because of an increased emphasis on the theoretical aspects of appraisal.

Studies such as the one reported here can observe, describe, and characterize selected aspects of a journal such as the *American Archivist*, but they are only a first step. Those components of the *American Archivist* not included here should be analyzed in order to achieve a full view of the journal. These would include other sections of the journal, such as "Case Studies" and "Reviews," which were excluded from the present study. Research could also be undertaken in the area of bibliometrics in an attempt to characterize the citation practices of the *American Archivist* authors, as well as those from both inside and outside archival studies that have cited the journal. The results of these and similar studies need to be compared with analyses of other elements of the archival professional literature before the total body of the literature can be fully understood.