ARMA v. SAA: The History and Heart of Professional Friction

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Abstract

ARMA International and the Society of American Archivists (SAA) share overlapping membership, similar missions, and a tumultuous history. This paper reviews the history of SAA in relation to the field of records management, exploring both the facts and the context in which America's largest records management association split from its largest archival association.

The History

From Social Scientist to Historian

In 1884, a group of historians separated from the American Social Science Association (ASSA) to form the American Historical Association (AHA). Since the ASSA's establishment in 1865, the study of history had begun to shift from predominantly a rich man's craft to a profession in its own right. ASSA sought to represent historical interests within its broader concern for social sciences, and its president discouraged a split of the organization's membership. But the newborn *professional historians*, including only fifteen professors, five assistant professors, and about thirty graduate students, recognized the need for independence and created the AHA.[1] AHA was incorporated by an act of Congress in 1889 "for the promotion of historical studies, the collection and preservation of historical manuscripts and for kindred purposes in the interest of American history and of history in America."[2]

[1] Arthur S. Link, "The American Historical Association, 1884–1984: Retrospect and Prospect," American Historical Association, http://www.historians.org/info/AHA_History/alink.htm, accessed 3 April 2011.

[2] "AHA Congressional Charter, Current Act of Incorporation," American Historical Association, http://www.historians.org/info/charter.cfm, accessed 13 March 2011.

AHA's interest in and promotion of archives was evident from the first days of its existence. Member John Franklin Jameson made the first formal plea for a central national archives in 1890 and encouraged the AHA executive council to create a Public Archives Commission in 1899. In the following decade, efforts by Jameson and the newly formed Public Archives Commission were instrumental in establishing the first state archives (the Alabama Department of Archives History in 1901)[3] and in organizing the first annual conference of archivists (1909).[4] Jameson also assisted with AHA-endorsed petitions to Congress for the construction of a new government building—a hall of records—designed to hold the nation's historical documents (1901 and 1910).[5]

AHA did not originate the hall of records concept. In fact, in 1877 a Committee on Public Buildings and Grounds, appointed by President Rutherford B. Hayes, recommended construction of a fireproof building for centralized storage of inactive government records.[6] Early on, the recommended hall of records was generally understood to be a storage facility—a secure building to house inactive government records. The records would remain the property of their originating offices and would not be accessible to other government units or to researchers. Between 1906 and 1911, Jameson began working to change the proposed hall of records into a national archives. This new terminology reflected Jameson's view that originating offices should relinquish intellectual as well as physical custody of their inactive records and that procedures should be developed to permit future administrative and research use of government records without oversight by their originating offices.[7]

In 1934, after decades of failed attempts to develop a national archives or hall of records[8] and thanks in large part to Jameson's persistent efforts, Congress passed a bill to create a National Archives of the United States.[9] The National

[3] Kathleen D. Roe, *Arranging and Describing Archives and Manuscripts* (Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 2006), 35.

[4] Lester J. Cappon, "The Archival Profession and the Society of American Archivists," *American Archivist* 15 (July 1952): 195.

[5] Victor Gondos, Jr., *J. Franklin Jameson and the Birth of the National Archives 1906–1926* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1981), 12, 29.

[6] Gondos, Jr., *Birth of the National Archives*, 7. The committee faced a twofold problem: Records were accumulating beyond the storage capacity of government offices and the records were not adequately secure against fire hazard. Interestingly, the committee considered and rejected the idea of destroying unnecessary records, instead suggesting that they simply be moved to another location. Retention and disposition decisions were perhaps too overwhelming, so it was easier to keep everything but to stash it out of sight!

[7] Gondos, Jr., *Birth of the National Archives*, 30–32.

[8] Gondos, Jr.'s *Birth of the National Archives* offers a more extensive look at unsuccessful attempts in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, including Senator Henry Cabot Lodge's 1906 Bill to Establish a Record Office, which proposed a Board of Record Commissioners that would, in effect, function as a national archives.

[9] H. G. Jones, *The Records of a Nation* (New York: Atheneum, 1969), 14.

Archives operated as an independent federal agency reporting to the president, assumed responsibility for the records of the three branches of government, and fulfilled Jameson's long-held vision of a building and an entity that would collect, preserve, and provide access to the historical records of the United States. President Franklin D. Roosevelt appointed Robert D. W. Connor, a history professor at the University of North Carolina, as the first Archivist of the United States. Connor was nominated for the position by AHA.[10]

After resolving the questions and challenges that arise with the establishment of any new organization—preparing facilities, hiring staff, setting priorities, securing financial resources, and so on—the National Archives was ready to collect, preserve, and provide access to federal records of enduring historical value. From 1935 to 1940, the National Archives searched more than six thousand Washington, D.C., offices to collect records for permanent retention. Staff members identified nearly three million cubic feet of records, more than thirty-four million running feet of film, and millions of photographic negatives and maps, all to be transferred to the new National Archives facilities.[11] They also discovered inconsistent filing methods, poor storage environments, unsupervised records creation and duplication, and overall bad recordkeeping practices within the federal agencies.[12]

A second records survey, also begun in 1935, focused on identifying and destroying useless records (records without permanent historical value) with the intent of reducing in-office storage costs and preventing such records from being transferred to the Archives. The survey process involved agencies presenting disposition requests to the Archives, archivists analyzing the requests, and Archivist Connor submitting records destruction recommendations for approval by Congress. Once approved by Congress, the requesting agency could destroy those particular records. The process was almost immediately untenable for the Archives staff, as agencies submitted more than nine thousand series for disposition analysis in 1936 and almost twenty-eight thousand series in 1937. The Archives refined and streamlined the process in its first few years, but the Records Disposal Act of 1939 had greater impact. The law permitted the development of disposition schedules that identified record series similar to those

[10] Jones, *Records of a Nation*, 14–17.

[11] Donald R. McCoy, *The National Archives: America's Ministry of Documents 1934–1968* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1978), 60–61. McCoy's book also indicates there were 108,000 cubic feet of historical paper records in 1861 and 1,031,000 cubic feet in 1916 (page 5). In 1940, the total was almost 3 million cubic feet, and, in 1945, there were 16 million cubic feet (page 158). Today, according to NARA's website, the Archives contains about 9 billion paper records; 7.2 million maps, charts, and architectural drawings; more than 20 million still photographs; billions of machine-readable data sets; and more than 365,000 reels of film and 110,000 videotapes. These numbers do not include holdings of the Electronic Records Archives. "About the National Archives," National Archives, http://www.archives.gov/publications/general-info-leaflets/1-about-archives.html, accessed 19 March 2011.

[12] Robert W. Krauskopf, "The Hoover Commissions and Federal Recordkeeping," *American Archivist* 21 (October 1958): 371.

previously approved for destruction. Such records could be destroyed, based on prior approval and without legislative redundancy, when Congress was not in session.[13]

From Historian to Archivist

As the National Archives began to survey federal records in 1935, an AHA committee, recognizing the growing distinction between historians who *use* archives and archivists who *manage* them, recommended "the creation of a self-governing organization of professional archivists, which should enjoy the strong support of the AHA."[14] Albert Ray Newsome, who became the first president of the Society of American Archivists (SAA) upon its founding in 1936,[15] led this committee. SAA was founded "to promote sound principles of archival economy and to facilitate cooperation among archivists and archival agencies."[16] AHA immediately reduced its involvement with state and local archives, as well as with the National Archives, so as not to duplicate or compete with SAA's efforts.[17]

The National Archives and SAA immediately developed a close relationship, as the majority of SAA's early members were Archives employees.[18] SAA began with twelve committees that focused on topics of concern to practicing archivists. Emmett J. Leahy, a founding member of SAA and a National Archives staff member since 1935, chaired the Reduction of Archival Material Committee. The committee aimed to "appraise large quantities of apparently routine records to determine how the volume [could] be reduced by destruction of worthless material,"[19] to develop appraisal procedures such that only records of value would be retained, and to establish categories of records with recommendations

[13] McCoy, *The National Archives*, 60–63.

[14] Link, "The American Historical Association."

[15] Link, "The American Historical Association." SAA is sometimes referred to as a "daughter organization" of AHA, an offspring produced because archival interests were not adequately advanced by scholarly historians. This splintering mirrors the separation of AHA from ASSA in 1884, suggesting a pattern of increased specialization and the establishment of new professional associations. This occurred again in the 1950s with the founding of records management associations distinct from SAA.

[16] "An Introduction to SAA," Society of American Archivists, http://www2.archivists.org/about/introduction-to-saa, accessed 13 March 2011.

[17] Link, "The American Historical Association."

[18] There are discrepancies in the number of founding SAA members. Cappon notes 226 founding members, including 19 state archivists, 83 National Archives employees, 56 curators of historical manuscripts, 20 academic historians, and the rest with related interests. "The Archival Profession," 197. According to Robert H. Bahmer's "Tenth Annual Meeting of the Society of American Archivists," *American Archivist* 10 (January 1947): 3–8, SAA began with 124 individual and 4 institutional members. By 1943, individual membership had increased to 231.

[19] Philip C. Brooks, letter to Walter Hausdorfer, 11 May 1937, SAA Records, 200/03/02, Box 4, Folder 12, UWM Mss 172, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Libraries, Archives Department.

as to whether they should be retained or destroyed.[20] By 1938, the Reduction of Archival Material Committee proposed distinctions between papers to be retained for their historical value, papers to be retained for their "protective value to the Government," and useless papers, which included routine form materials and extra copies of record material.[21] In the same year, SAA published its first issue of the *American Archivist*, which provided a critical forum for discussion among National Archives employees and other SAA members and which today offers invaluable insights into the heart of archival evolution in the United States. In February 1941, the Reduction of Archival Material Committee was renamed the Records Administration Committee but was more commonly referred to as the Records Management Committee.[22]

Leahy reported in the January 1940 issue of the *American Archivist* that procedures to reduce the bulk of federal records were improving thanks to the establishment of the National Archives and the enactment of the Records Disposal Act of 1939.[23] The article compares America's still-developing archival practices to the more established recordkeeping and record destruction practices of European nations and offers a vision to strengthen the management of federal records in the United States. Leahy stresses that historical records cannot be properly preserved unless the vast quantities of useless papers are first identified and destroyed. Systematic identification and authorized destruction of useless records would allow originating offices to destroy such records without transferring them to the Archives, leaving archivists better able to focus on records of enduring value. Authorization to destroy, in Leahy's view, need only be acquired once for a particular category of record, after which destruction could recur without bureaucratic delays. Leahy clearly viewed archivists as crucial to the identification and authorization process, not only cooperating with, but also supervising government agencies in all record-related matters.[24]

In the October 1940 issue of the *American Archivist*, Philip C. Brooks, a member of the National Archives staff, supported Leahy's philosophy of records

[20] SAA, letter to the Committee, 11 June 1937, SAA Records, 200/03/02, Box 4, Folder 12, UWM Mss 172, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Libraries, Archives Department.

[21] SAA, "Report of the Committee on the Reduction of Archival Material, 1937–1938," SAA Records, 200/03/02, Box 4, Folder 13, UWM Mss 172, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Libraries, Archives Department. Concerns and even terminology were clearly shared between SAA and the National Archives, as this committee's efforts were directly linked to one of the Archives' largest challenges.

[22] Finding Aid, Chronologies of SAA Units, SAA Records, UWM Mss 172, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Libraries, Archives Department.

[23] Emmett J. Leahy, "Reduction of Public Records," *American Archivist* 3 (January 1940): 38.

[24] Later that same year, Ernst Posner opined that archivists' involvement in records administration is a first step toward increased power for the profession. Though not a National Archives employee, Posner viewed the Archives staff as experts to be entrusted with historical records of the past, present, and future. He wanted archivists to be consulted in all aspects of public record making and recordkeeping. Ernst Posner, "Some Aspects of Archival Development since the French Revolution," *American Archivist* 3 (July 1940): 172.

administration and archival involvement early in the records life cycle. Brooks's article, focusing on records appraisal more than destruction, states that "the archivist looks upon current records as future archives and it is a legitimate part of his function to make available counsel on how they can best be handled."[25] He believed that appraisal is most effective when records are still in active use by their creators, as the records can then be understood in their original context and in relation to other records. Early appraisal would help archivists and researchers by ensuring that historical records are properly cared for and eventually transferred to the Archives. It would also benefit originating offices by reducing space, time, and labor devoted to nonhistorical records.[26] By July 1943, Brooks's writing reveals hints of disagreement within the profession as to the proper boundaries of archivists' role in records administration. He cites eight *American Archivist* articles (including his own 1940 paper) that recognize archivists' involvement before records are placed in archival custody. He predicts that later generations of archivists, researchers, office administrators, and society as a whole will suffer if archivists do not act on the principle that "the whole life history of records is an integrated continuous entity."[27]

In 1943, the Act Concerning the Disposal of Records expanded the effectiveness of disposition schedules and permitted the ongoing and automatic destruction of identified record series after Congress approved the schedules, regardless of whether Congress was in session. Solon Buck, Archivist of the United States since Connor's departure in 1941, solidified even greater efficiency with the invention of general schedules that applied to multiple agencies. Congress amended the Act Concerning the Disposal of Records to allow general schedules in 1945. General schedules helped to ensure destruction of administrative records common to many federal agencies and to identify certain historical records that agencies should transfer to the National Archives.[28]

The evolution of SAA and the National Archives coincided with World War II, which caused the creation of several short-term federal agencies and unprecedented quantities of federal records. The National Archives staff deviated from its usual responsibilities to consult with new government agencies and deal with masses of war records. At least some archivists perceived records administration duties as wartime efforts that would not be sustained after the war ended. They expected to return to their usual work at the Archives when peace resumed and the records of wartime government agencies were appropriately destroyed or

[25] Philip C. Brooks, "The Selection of Records for Preservation," *American Archivist* 3 (October 1940): 222–23.

[26] McCoy, *The National Archives*, 110.

[27] Philip C. Brooks, "Current Aspects of Records Administration," *American Archivist* 6 (July 1943): 158–59, 164.

[28] McCoy, *The National Archives*, 156–57.

transferred to the Archives.[29] While records administration was beyond the scope of traditional archival institutions, none were better qualified to perform the task than American archivists, who did so in true patriotic fashion.

In 1947, Congress established the Commission on the Organization of the Executive Branch of the Government to study government programs and services, with goals of increasing efficiency and reducing the number of independent agencies that reported directly to the president. Chaired by former president Herbert Hoover, it was commonly known as the Hoover Commission. In January 1948, Leahy proposed that the Hoover Commission conduct a detailed study of federal records problems. The study was endorsed by Assistant Archivist of the United States Wayne C. Grover and earned the commission's approval.[30] For almost two years, Leahy led the Hoover Commission's Records Management Task Force, charged to explore these questions:

> Where does staff responsibility for records management lie in the federal government?
>
> What are the respective responsibilities of staff agencies and of the operating agencies?
>
> Should there be a new General Records Act?
>
> What is the proper role of the intermediate records storage centers?[31]

The task force presented its report, "Records Management in the United States Government: A Report with Recommendations," to the Hoover Commission in October 1948. Authored by Leahy, it is typically referred to as the Leahy Report. The Leahy Report offers detailed and dizzying accounts of the financial repercussions of poor records administration. He concludes that a Federal Records Management Act should be passed to establish the government's authority over the creation, management, disposition, and preservation of all federal records. He also proposes that the federal government establish a formal, centralized records management program, which he calls the Federal Records Administration, to develop and promote recordkeeping improvements on a government-wide scale.[32] While the National Archives had assumed records administration duties, Leahy proposes that the United States government create

[29] Wayne C. Grover, "Recent Developments in Federal Archival Activities," *American Archivist* 14 (January 1951): 11.

[30] Grover later "confessed" to SAA that he had recommended Leahy to lead the task force, not realizing that "the Leahy bomb" would result. Grover, "Recent Developments," 9.

[31] Jones, *Records of a Nation*, 42.

[32] Krauskopf, "The Hoover Commissions," 377.

an entirely new records management agency and that the National Archives become part of it.[33]

Leahy's recommendations to the Hoover Commission—subordinating the Archives within a new Federal Records Administration and in effect reducing the status and authority of archivists[34]—were controversial to archivists in the National Archives. Even before the Leahy Report was presented, some archivists felt the profession had lost sight of its true mission. Irving Schiller said that too much focus on short-term cost reduction was detracting from the equally important intellectual aspects of archival work. The National Archives was in danger of sacrificing its cultural purposes in favor of more tangible (but less noble), material-based aspirations of saving money and promoting managerial efficiency. Schiller believed that records administration was damaging the professional reputation of archivists and that the National Archives was becoming little more than a filing department. To achieve short-term material gain, in Schiller's view, archivists abandoned the tradition of scholarship and research, deserted historiography, and renounced the broad intellectual comprehension of records in archival custody.[35]

In January 1949, Grover, then Archivist of the United States, wrote to President Harry S. Truman to disagree with Leahy's suggestion that the Archives be subsumed within the proposed Federal Records Administration. The wheels of bureaucracy turned unusually fast, however, and neither SAA nor AHA (whose voices were noticeably absent in the aftermath of Leahy's report) found an opportunity to alter the course of events that followed. The commission's report, issued in February 1949, recommended that the National Archives be placed within a newly developed Records Management Bureau, which would be part of a new Office of General Services. The next month, Grover submitted another letter, this one opposing both the creation of a Records Management Bureau and the inclusion of the Archives in an Office of General Services. The House of Representatives passed a bill on 8 June 1949, partnering the National Archives with records management, rather than making it subservient to a Federal Records Administration (or Records Management Bureau) as Leahy had envisioned.[36]

[33] Emmett J. Leahy, "Records Management in the United States Government" (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1949).

[34] The Leahy Report was heavily criticized for its style as well as content. It was described as having a subjective and overly dramatic tone, lacking evidence to back up statistics, and offering no discussion of alternative solutions. Krauskopf, "The Hoover Commissions," 379–80.

[35] Irving P. Schiller, "The Archival Profession in Eclipse," *American Archivist* 11 (July 1948): 227–33.

[36] Oliver W. Holmes, "The National Archives at a Turn in the Road," *American Archivist* 12 (October 1949): 348–49. Holmes's article provides a detailed look at the multiple political forces that influenced the very rushed passing of this bill.

The political process resulted in the National Archives and its new partner being placed within another newly created government entity, the General Services Administration (GSA). The GSA was developed to streamline property-related government services within one centralized office and, at least in part, to reduce the number of independent government agencies.[37] Until 1949, the National Archives had always maintained an independent and unique status as both a service and cultural agency. But its recent focus on records administration, along with Leahy's description of the proposed Federal Records Administration as a service institution, made it a logical candidate for inclusion in the service-oriented GSA. Effective 1 July 1949, the Federal Property and Administrative Services Act of 1949 officially added a records management arm to the National Archives, changed its name to the National Archives and Records Service (NARS) to reflect new responsibilities for current records, and placed NARS under the GSA's authority.[38] The Archivist of the United States was now appointed by and reported to the GSA administrator. The act of 1949 authorized the GSA administrator 1) to make surveys of government records and records management and disposal practices and obtain reports thereon from federal agencies; 2) to promote, in cooperation with the executive agencies, improved records management practices and controls in such agencies, including the central storage or disposition of records not needed by such agencies for their current use; and 3) to report to the Congress and the director of the Bureau of the Budget from time to time the results of such activities.[39] The Federal Records Act of 1950, enacted in September of that year, required every federal agency to establish and maintain records management procedures and thereby created the framework for a comprehensive federal records management program. By 1951, the program was staffed with records management personnel and the Federal Records Center (similar in function to the hall of records that had been proposed as early as 1877) was established.

NARS archivists were not necessarily disconcerted by the formal recognition of records management; indeed, by 1948, Grover had recognized a need to distinguish between archives and records management work.[40] But the Archives staff was extremely unhappy to be placed within the GSA. When staff member Oliver W. Holmes assessed the situation in October 1949, he described the GSA as "just a housekeeping agency," geared toward buildings, property management, warehousing, and central purchasing.[41] Placement in the GSA failed to

[37] Mary C. Lethbridge, "News Notes," *American Archivist* 12 (October 1949): 429.

[38] "The Development of the U.S. Archival Profession and Timelines for the National Archives," National Archives, http://www.archives.gov/about/history/milestones.html, accessed 3 April 2011.

[39] Jones, *Records of a Nation*, 58–59.

[40] Grover, "Recent Developments," 7.

[41] Holmes, "Archives at a Turn in the Road," 343.

recognize the Archives as a *cultural* agency. Holmes was optimistic, however, that the Archives would no longer be burdened with records management at the expense of traditional archival work. He also viewed records management as a path toward greater visibility and financial support: "It can hardly be expected that Congress, as a whole, will ever possess an appreciation of the traditional activities of the agency. It accepts them to a degree on faith but without enthusiasm or even much interest. The records management program, however, judging from its prompt endorsement of the recommendations of the Hoover Commission, appeals to Congress as an obvious ingredient of efficient and economical administration that deserves support."[42]

Leahy published again in the July 1949 *American Archivist*, shedding light on his evolving views on the archivist's role in records administration. In "Modern Records Management," he continues to emphasize that archivists must be involved in identifying records for preservation, but no longer in a supervisory capacity. Rather, the process should be led by management, which would oversee the "aggressive, planned destruction of the vast majority of duplicated or transitory records" and thereby ensure that records of value could be preserved.[43] While archivists offered expertise in selecting, storing, and preserving historical records for later administrative and research use, the managers of an agency knew what records to create and how long they were needed for operational purposes. The archivist could not presume to dictate what records should be created: if management deemed a record unnecessary for its business operations, it would "apply a form of birth control" to stop the creation of that record and thereby increase operational efficiency. Archivists must, however, offer guidance with regard to bulk records destruction, as "destruction of records must provide maximum insurance that the essential core of recorded experience…is preserved."[44] Managers tended to destroy records as early as possible, once they were no longer needed to serve business operations. If archivists did not provide input on potential historical value of the records, management would unwittingly destroy records that should have come to the Archives.

The term "records management" is clearly part of Leahy's vocabulary at this point, but he does not use the term "records manager." Instead, he writes that archivists support the efforts of "records engineers" to serve the needs of an abstract, poorly defined "management." These records engineers were largely former archivists who had "converted their previous training or experience to the requirements of records management in a reasonable period of time"[45]—presumably National Archives staff members who had stepped away from their

[42] Holmes, "Archives at a Turn in the Road," 354.

[43] Emmett J. Leahy, "Modern Records Management," *American Archivist* 12 (July 1949): 232.

[44] Leahy, "Modern Records Management," 233–34.

[45] Leahy, "Modern Records Management," 239.

usual duties to assist with wartime needs for records administration. In subsequent years, the records engineers would be known as records administrators or records managers, engaged in records management as part of a larger management framework.

Despite the controversial transfer of the National Archives to the GSA, *American Archivist* articles in the early 1950s tended to be calm and upbeat. Grover reflected in 1951 on ways in which the GSA and the new records management program had helped the Archives. The GSA provided substantial funding increases for the creation of records centers to store records scheduled for destruction, which in turn opened up space for new acquisitions in the archives facilities that had previously been near capacity. The records management program garnered a measure of authority and prestige that the Archives had not previously known, again indirectly benefiting the archival mission and affirming Holmes's 1949 optimism. The GSA may not have appreciated the intellectual and cultural elements of the archives profession, but the archivists were able to resume and improve their traditional archival functions when the records management staff assumed responsibility for administration of current records.[46]

Grover's 1951 article suggests some animosity toward Leahy, with language such as the "Leahy bomb" and a passing mention of the "gruesome" details of his disagreements with Leahy's report.[47] He accepts and even encourages, however, the distinct educational and experiential qualifications needed by archivists and records managers, emphasizing the archivist's need for academic training in history and the social sciences and the critical importance of archivists' professional connection with their historian forefathers. ("There is no ingrate like the child who spurns his parent, or, for that matter, the parent who spurns his child."[48]) Records management specialists, meanwhile, need a managerial perspective to be accepted as part of the management team, for only as a member of the management team could they "ever hope to be effective in the long run."[49] Grover maintains an optimistic view that the new records management specialists would help to improve the quality and reduce the quantity of federal records, while better enabling archivists to do their work, which he says is "at the heart of the matter—assuring the preservation of those [records] that are worthy of being preserved."[50] He states, too, that the new structure would save taxpayers' money, but is almost apologetic about using such "crass and material

[46] Grover, "Recent Developments," 9, 11.

[47] Grover, "Recent Developments," 4, 9.

[48] Grover, "Recent Developments," 12.

[49] Grover, "Recent Developments," 8.

[50] Grover, "Recent Developments," 9. Notice the insinuation that the archivists' work is more important than the records managers' work.

terms."[51] (The National Archives, after all, was a scholarly and cultural institution, its mission not to be driven by materialistic concerns.)

The term "records manager" appears nowhere in Grover's 1951 article but is used heavily in his 1954 SAA presidential address. In 1954, Grover placed great emphasis on the need for SAA to keep its membership qualifications open to records managers. This plea, in my interpretation, was not based on parent-child camaraderie or professional allegiances, although he does encourage archivists and records managers to stay on cooperative terms. It was actually driven by material interests in solidifying a membership pool large enough for the SAA to sustain itself and pursue its cultural mission. "It is folly for archivists even to think of parting company, literally or psychologically, from the newly developed specialists in records management"—to some degree because of their common interests, but primarily because "our numbers are too few." The underlying goal of Grover's statement was to sustain and enlarge SAA's membership.[52]

NARS remained part of GSA until 1984, when, after much effort on the part of archivists, President Ronald Reagan signed into law the National Archives and Records Administration Act of 1984 that removed the Archives from the GSA, creating an independent agency known as the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA).[53]

From Archivist to Records Manager

The American Records Management Association (ARMA) was established in 1955 with the merger of records management associations based in Chicago, Detroit, Minneapolis, Cleveland, Milwaukee, New York, and Los Angeles. These local groups had existed since as early as 1917 as "Filing" associations, but at least three of the groups (Chicago, Milwaukee, and New York) began using the title "Records Management" instead of "Filing" in the early 1950s, the same time period in which records management was becoming recognized as a distinct profession.[54]

ARMA's initial objectives were to promote a scientific interest in records management; enlarge the views and scope of service of those interested in records management; provide a source of records management information;

[51] Grover, "Recent Developments," 9.

[52] Wayne C. Grover, "Archives: Society and Profession," *American Archivist* 18 (January 1955): 10.

[53] A behind-the-scenes description of this effort is found in Robert M. Warner, *Diary of a Dream: A History of the National Archives Independence Movement, 1980–1985* (Metuchen, N.J.: Scarecrow Press, 1995).

[54] "ARMA Milwaukee," ARMA Milwaukee, http://www.armamilwaukee.org/armamke.shtm, "ARMA International," ARMA Metro NYC Chapter, http://www.armanyc.org/about, and "About Us," ARMA Chicago, http://www.armachicago.org/htdocs/about/about.php, all accessed 28 March 2011.

and develop and promulgate standards for those engaged in the records management field. The organization received early endorsement from Grover as Archivist of the United States and had approximately five hundred members by the time its constitution was ratified in January 1956.[55] ARMA launched its first official publication, the *Records Review*, in 1960.

A group of twelve corporate and government records administrators from New York founded the Association of Records Executives and Administrators (AREA) in 1955. AREA pursued its mission, to "facilitate exchange of information on Records Management," by hosting conferences; publishing a scholarly journal; and offering scholarship grants, training seminars, and other professional programming.[56] AREA remained smaller than ARMA, with approximately six hundred members by 1975, but it maintained three U.S. and two international chapters.[57]

ARMA and AREA periodically discussed a merger, but administrative obstacles and members' loyalties forestalled any such action for twenty years. In 1975, ARMA and AREA officially merged into one association called the Association of Records Managers and Administrators, thus retaining the ARMA acronym but with a new meaning. The group officially changed its name to ARMA International in 2005.[58]

While the professionalization of records management stemmed from archivists in the federal government, ARMA International originated from pre-existing paraprofessional groups that focused on filing and clerical work, primarily in the business realm. ARMA International found its niche, borrowing from the public-sector rise of the records management professional while maintaining an otherwise neglected focus on private-sector business needs, from the earliest days of its existence.

The Heart

Professional Identity Crisis

When SAA was first formed, AHA quickly backed away from archival concerns in deference to the new profession.[59] It was, more or less, a clean break. Such a graceful passing of the torch did not occur with the establishment of

[55] Alice Haltom, "ARMA—From the Beginning," *Information and Records Management* (September 1980): 35.

[56] Vincent J. Bosak, "Our ARMA Ancestors," *ARMAWORKS Newsletter of the Washington, D.C. ARMA Chapter*, undated.

[57] "ARMA International," ARMA Metro NYC Chapter.

[58] ARMA International, "ARMA.org Help," http://www.arma.org/help/index.cfm, accessed 3 April 2011.

[59] Cappon, "The Archives Profession," 196–97.

ARMA and AREA, as SAA members' interest in records administration did not diminish and the proper role of SAA in records management was not easily discerned. Perhaps the division between historian and archivist is more easily drawn than that between archivist and records manager. Historians certainly use archives, but a clear division of labor and mutual respect seems to preclude much professional tension. In the 1930s, AHA members readily agreed to pass archival responsibilities to the new profession and actually spearheaded the development of SAA. But SAA members of the 1950s did not unanimously endorse the new records management associations or the efforts of records managers to establish a unique professional identity. Historians gladly gave archives to the archivists, but to some archivists, records managers *stole* part of their responsibilities.

Archivists and records managers have debated for decades about proper boundaries. Some argue that records management is but a part of the archives profession that considers records' pre-archival life. In this view, the fundamental goal of records management is to ensure that historical records enter the archives. Others argue that archival work is just an aspect of records management that deals with the small percentage of records that are retained beyond their administrative usefulness. On this side of the debate, records management encompasses the entire records life cycle, whether the disposition is destruction or permanent retention. Faced with this chicken-or-the-egg dilemma, some attempt to draw a line between a record's active life, during which it is the records manager's responsibility, and its archival life, when it enters the realm of the archivist. Such an approach promises tranquility but fails to acknowledge the overlap between archivists' and records managers' duties—an overlap that is necessary not only for the sake of the record but also for the effectiveness of both professionals.[60, 61]

Turmoil in the Stacks

In 1956, SAA's Committee on Records Management studied records administration in state and local governments and, the following year, sought to expand to the corporate sector. The committee chairman wrote in 1957, "I feel that any project undertaken by the Society to assist industry would not only attract industrial support, but would be instrumental in promoting the growth of the Society."[62] At this point, however, only a small group within SAA was trying

[60] Jay Atherton, "From Life Cycle to Continuum: Some Thoughts on the Records Management-Archives Relationship," *Archivaria* 21 (Winter 1985–1986): 46.

[61] Holmes, "Archives at a Turn in the Road," 343.

[62] Rex Beach, letter to Dolores C. Renze, 8 May 1957, SAA Records, 200/03/02, Box 4, Folder 16, UWM Mss 172, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Libraries, Archives Department.

to keep pace with new associations focused solely and entirely on records management concerns. Even if SAA's committee work resulted in admirable proposals—a difficult feat for any group of volunteers—the specific focus and continuing growth of ARMA and AREA gave those organizations the authoritative voice on records management issues. SAA no longer sat at the head of the table. ARMA and AREA expanded quickly, particularly in the realm of corporate enterprise. Private businesses faced challenges of records bulk, organization, access, and preservation but were concerned primarily with profit and efficiency rather than historical and cultural memory. ARMA and AREA filled this pressing need that SAA was not effectively meeting.

Throughout the late 1950s and early 1960s, records managers who continued SAA membership after the creation of ARMA and AREA expressed dissatisfaction with SAA, claiming to be treated as stepchildren or second-class citizens.[63] W. H. Topham, Belden Menkus, William Rofes, and Virginia Lake, for example, wrote letters to SAA leaders complaining that they were not being treated equally in the *American Archivist* and at annual conferences.[64] They threatened to leave SAA if conditions did not improve. Thornton W. Mitchell later opined that SAA's records managers were unhappy to be a minority within the Society, yet felt unwelcomed by ARMA and AREA since those organizations focused more on business and industry than on government.[65]

By 1959, SAA's Records Management Committee, then chaired by W. H. Topham, presented the following recommendations to the Society's leadership team:

1. The Society does not now offer much to those particularly interested in the field of Records Management. The Committee recommends that it take more active leadership in this field. Unless it does, the Society risks the loss of members to other associations that deal specifically with this subject.

2. Archivists, through necessity, will eventually have to familiarize themselves with, and use, records management techniques. They, therefore, should welcome a more active program in records management.

[63] William Rofes, letter to Belden Menkus, 19 October 1959, SAA Records, 200/03/03/02, Box 3, Folder 17, UWM Mss 172, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Libraries, Archives Department.

[64] Thomas Wilds, letter to Leon DeValinger, Jr., 7 December 1959; W. H. Topham, letter to Dolores C. Renze, 11 September 1959; Virginia Lake, letter to Joseph F. Halpin, 12 April 1965; Belden Menkus, letter to Mary Bryan, 15 October 1959; Rofes to Menkus, 19 October 1959. SAA Records, 200/03/03/02, Box 3, Folder 17–18, UWM Mss 172, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Libraries, Archives Department.

[65] Thornton W. Mitchell, letter to F. Gerald Ham, 14 November 1973, SAA Records 200/06/02/01, Box 1, Folder 19, UWM Mss 172, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Libraries, Archives Department.

3. Archivists can be of great assistance to the records manager by helping him decide what kind of material he should preserve for long-range historical use.[66]

Some SAA members felt, however, that the organization should stop addressing records management issues altogether and leave the new profession to the new professional associations. Records management had grown so far beyond its original focus of records destruction that archivists should not be expected to play a large role.[67] Others suggested that records management interests be given no more attention than other archival topics; they were concerned that records management was getting too much attention at SAA conferences and that records managers might try to "run away with the organization."[68]

Some members concurred with the Records Management Committee, recognizing that records management would substantially alter the historical record and that archival interests must be considered throughout the records life cycle. LeRoy DePuy believed that SAA would be "irreparably damaged" if it allowed records managers to pull away, citing the need for a united front to handle records properly throughout their life cycle.[69] Thomas Wilds was more concerned about SAA's membership pool, which would diminish beyond repair if SAA did not keep its records management members and attract new ones.[70]

Other members believed it was necessary to be both archivist and records manager, particularly because records managers are not always aware of their archival responsibilities.[71] Ian Maclean felt archivists and records managers should receive the same training and then focus on the part of the records life cycle that best suits their personal inclination.[72] Morris Radoff believed that archivists must take on the role of records manager and future archivists must be trained in both fields.[73]

And one brave records manager, Robert H. Darling, asked for archivists'

[66] Topham to Renze, 11 September 1959.

[67] Robert H. Bahmer, "The National Archives after Twenty Years," *American Archivist* 18 (July 1955): 202.

[68] W. H. Topham, memo to Records Management Committee Members, 21 August 1959; Mitchell to Bryan, 30 November 1959. SAA Records, 200/03/03/02, Box 3, Folder 17–18, UWM Mss 172, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Libraries, Archives Department.

[69] LeRoy DePuy, "Archivists and Records Managers—A Partnership," *American Archivist* 23 (January 1960): 51.

[70] Wilds to DeValinger, Jr.

[71] Robert A. Shiff, "The Archivist's Role in Records Management," *American Archivist* 19 (July 1956): 111.

[72] Ian Maclean, "Australian Experience in Record and Archives Management," *American Archivist* 22 (October 1959): 418.

[73] Morris L. Radoff, "What Should Bind Us Together," *American Archivist* 19 (January 1956): 3–4.

help. He conceded that records managers' business focus could result in the destruction of historically valuable records and that archivists are better able to predict what records will be of interest to future historians. "Remember that the archivists who follow you will be working with records that we are accumulating. You tell us what they will need, and I promise that we'll try our best to protect it for you."[74]

Seeking Reconciliation

While such heated debates took place, leaders of SAA, ARMA, and AREA expressed the desire to cooperate for the benefit of mutual interest.[75] Correspondence in the 1960s between SAA and AREA, for instance, reveals efforts to enhance understanding and collaboration between archivists and records managers: "One of the reasons for the ever-widening division between them is a lack of mutual understanding. A good way to improve our mutual understanding and thus bring both sides closer together is to have archivists speak before records managers' associations and vice versa."[76]

In 1965, SAA's Records Management Committee recommended that "the Society of American Archivists pay more heed to the needs of records management and come to the realization that without good records management there can never be adequate archives."[77] This and similar recommendations, however, were typically quickly forgotten. Without concrete implementation plans for such proposals (that is, *how* SAA should "pay more heed" and "come to the realization"), good ideas could not produce enduring results. SAA's archival records are speckled with statements supporting cooperation between archivists and records managers, but these sentiments repeatedly dissolved because of poor implementation and lack of sustainable follow-through.

SAA and ARMA International have made periodic attempts to partner throughout their co-existence. Some attempts have successfully produced cooperative publications and joint conferences and educational programs. The organizations struggle to sustain a relationship, however, and partnerships have been short-term affairs. The logistics of planning large conferences, for example,

[74] Robert H. Darling, "The Relation between Archivists and Records Managers," *American Archivist* 22 (April 1959): 211–15.

[75] Oliver W. Holmes (SAA), letter to Donald A. Schaner (ARMA), 26 January 1960, SAA Records, 200/03/03/03, Box 4, Folder 50, UWM Mss 172, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Libraries, Archives Department.

[76] Thomas Wilds (AREA), letter to Mary Givens Bryan (SAA), 17 February 1960, SAA Records, 200/03/03/03, Box 4, Folder 49, UWM Mss 172, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Libraries, Archives Department.

[77] "SAA Records Management Committee Annual Report" (1965), SAA Records, 200/01/01, Box 1, Folder 34, UWM Mss 172, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Libraries, Archives Department.

preclude the regular occurrence of joint conferences, particularly when each association must schedule events several years in advance. Joint committees have met with limited success, frequently burdened by the time and communication struggles present in any group of volunteers. The most successful effort, the Joint ARMA-SAA Committee, was formed in 1990 by members of both organizations "to foster closer relationships and promote communications between archives and records management professionals as represented by their professional organizations (SAA and ARMA)."[78] By the time it disbanded in 2007, the joint committee had supported the creation of SAA's Records Management Roundtable (RMRT) in 1996 and spearheaded the development of ARMA International's Archives Industry Specific Group (Archives ISG) the following year.

The creation of the National Association of State Archives and Records Administrators (NASARA) in 1974 provides additional evidence that the schism between archivists and records managers left some professional needs unmet. The professional associations had split, but government programs continued to combine archives and records administration. Neither ARMA nor SAA sufficiently represented the full spectrum of the records life cycle, and NASARA grouped archivists and records managers together in the interest of government records. In 1984, the organization changed its name to the National Association of Government Archives and Records Administrators (NAGARA) so as not to limit its concern to one level of American government.[79]

ARMA International eliminated its Industry Specific Group structure in 2006 and no longer differentiates special interest groups within its membership. The organization currently seeks to meet industry-specific records management needs, including those of archivists, through its standard educational programming. SAA has continued to dabble in records management concerns and has sustained the Electronic Records Section and the Records Management Roundtable for over a decade. Formal partnership between ARMA International and SAA has been virtually nonexistent since the dissolution of the joint committee, but both organizations display the "SAA-ARMA Statement of Joint Purpose and Cooperation," adopted in 2003, on their respective websites.[80]

[78] Margaret Merrick, "Final Meeting of the SAA/ARMA Joint Committee," *The Records Manager: The Newsletter of the Society of American Archivists Records Management Roundtable* (November 2007), 14, http://www.archivists.org/saagroups/recmgmt/resources/newsletters/TRM_200711.pdf, accessed 3 April 2011.

[79] "A Brief History of NAGARA," NAGARA, http://nagara.org/displaycommon.cfm?an=1, accessed 3 April 2011.

[80] "SAA-ARMA Statement of Joint Purpose and Cooperation," Society of American Archivists, http://www.archivists.org/statements/saa-arma.asp and ARMA International, http://www.arma.org/about/overview/SAAstatement.cfm, both accessed 3 April 2011.

ARMA v. SAA: Is There a Winner?

Members and Missions

ARMA International now has over eleven thousand members from over thirty countries and includes "records managers, archivists, corporate librarians, imaging specialists, legal professionals, IT managers, consultants, and educators."[81] In recent years, businesses have become very concerned about legal requirements pertaining to records, particularly in light of the 2002 Sarbanes-Oxley Act and the 2006 revisions to the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure. Such concerns drive many corporations toward effective records management. Accordingly, ARMA International emphasizes legal compliance and cost savings as its main selling points.

Today, SAA's mission is "to serve the educational and informational needs of more than 5,500 individual and institutional members and to provide leadership to ensure the identification, preservation, and use of records of historical value."[82] Membership is open to "those who are or have been engaged in the custody, study, teaching, or control of records, archives, or private papers, or who wish to support the objectives of the Society."[83]

SAA maintains its first priority of preserving cultural memory. Archivists grew from the historical profession and have not lost their scholarly roots. Yet SAA would not want to merge back into AHA. Having earned professional independence, archivists have not considered returning to a subordinate status within a larger historian profession. Nor should they—the distinctions are great enough to warrant different training and certainly different professional associations. Likewise, the newborn records managers of the 1950s perceived enough differences between their interests and those of the archivists that they wanted to discuss common interests among themselves.

Electronic Records

"[T]he threat and promise of technological change has forced a fundamental reexamination of assumptions and an expanding consciousness of the organic and symbiotic relationship between the primary and secondary uses of

[81] "ARMA Overview," ARMA International, http://www.arma.org/about/overview/index.cfm, accessed 3 April 2011.

[82] "About SAA," Society of American Archivists, http://www.archivists.org/about/, accessed 13 March 2011.

[83] "Individual Full Membership," Society of American Archivists, http://www2.archivists.org/membership/full, accessed 3 April 2011.

documentation."[84] Electronic records have increased the shared duties of archivists and records managers and induced both professions to revisit the records life-cycle concept. Proliferation of computers, the Internet, and electronic records creation, distribution, and storage has created new challenges and opportunities for proper records retention, destruction, and preservation. The problems of electronic records management are creating new opportunities for cooperation between archivists and records managers. When archivists are properly informed of electronic records management concerns and are involved with the records life cycle from birth, the archival collection benefits, as do the users of that collection. When records managers consider the archival perspective and account for long-term historical value of electronic materials at the time of their creation, they can provide an ongoing supply of records for permanent archival preservation without adversely affecting business objectives.

SAA struggles, however, to assert its role in electronic records issues. Archivists work to develop standards and best practices to ensure proper preservation and ongoing access to electronic records of enduring historical value. Records managers focus on effective management of *active* records to meet the current business needs of an organization. Concern for future archival interests is typically beyond the scope of a records manager's job description, and acting on such concerns could jeopardize the records manager's primary goals. Instead, with support of legal counsel and proximity to high-level management, records managers are strengthening alliances with information technologists, a professional breed that thrives, even more so than records managers, on here-and-now results. Records managers, in fact, may be morphing into an altogether new professional breed, the information manager, with responsibility for full-scale information governance.[85] Archivists are uninvited but hope to tag along, as electronic records will otherwise not be available for archival preservation. When information technologists and records managers use *archive* and *archival* to mean inactive backup storage, and when members of the general public visit website "archives" to view last month's company newsletters, the comparatively few and easily disregarded archivists stand little chance of convincing society to adopt their language, much less their ideas.

[84] Bill Walker, "Records Managers and Archivists: A Survey of Roles," *ARMA Records Management Quarterly* 23 (1989): 20.

[85] Gordon Hoke, "Records Management Evolves to Information Governance," *KM World*, 1 January 2011, KM World, http://www.kmworld.com/Articles/Editorial/Feature/Records-management-evolves-to-information-governance-72918.aspx, accessed 3 April 2011.

Records Destruction

Perhaps the strongest tension between archivists and records managers relates to records destruction. Records managers might destroy information that an archivist would have preserved, and archivists complicate the records manager's job with interest in records of historical value. To be fair, records retention schedules typically factor in historical value to some degree, but the primary goal of records managers is to eliminate noncurrent records as quickly as possible. Keeping records beyond their legally required retention results in increased costs and risks for the records creators. If records are systematically and consistently destroyed according to established schedules, the records creator enjoys lower storage and maintenance costs, and avoids the need to produce those records in a court of law. The archivist, however, may view the short-term costs and risks as essential for long-term records preservation. The highly confidential and even potentially scandalous records of today, to the future-oriented archivist, can provide the most fascinating and valuable history for the next generation. In such a cost-benefit analysis, the archivist is sure to be viewed as an out-of-touch obstructionist, and the preservation argument may only succeed if the institution already has a solid archival program in place. In the battle of material versus culture, the argument for return on investment tends to win out and records tend to be destroyed. Yet the archivist wishes to appraise one last time, to consider the records in relation to the archival collection, and to have final authority on what constitutes historical value. Historical value, after all, depends on the unique content and context of a record at a particular time and cannot always be predicted at the time of creation. Archivists may be pleased that retention schedules help to prevent unimportant records from coming into the archives, but are also uncomfortable with destruction processes that do not allow for archival intervention.

Education, Certification, and Professional Status

Formal records management education is a relatively new phenomenon. Many of today's records management practitioners were, at least to some extent, self-taught, although they may have college degrees. Some graduate schools now offer records management courses in conjunction with archival training. While archivists may have traditionally obtained advanced degrees in history, recent trends link archival education with advanced degrees in library science. While neither archivists nor records managers follow one well-defined educational path, SAA and ARMA International both devote extensive talent and resources to the education of their members.

In 1975, the same year as their merger, ARMA and AREA perceived a need for formalized certification of records managers and pooled financial resources for the establishment of the Institute of Certified Records Managers (ICRM) as a distinct entity.[86] SAA followed suit in developing the Academy of Certified Archivists (ACA), an independent, nonprofit certifying organization of professional archivists, in 1989.[87] As of December 2010, the ICRM has 1,020 Certified Records Managers (CRMs), and the ACA has 1,062 Certified Archivists (CAs).[88] CRM candidates qualify to sit for the six-part ICRM exam with the "optimum" credentials of a master's degree from an accredited college or university and at least two years full-time professional experience.[89] CA candidates are eligible to sit for ACA's exam with a master's degree that includes at least nine semester hours of graduate archival administration and at least one year of qualifying professional archival experience.[90] Obtaining either certification requires a showing of significant knowledge in both fields.[91]

Although ARMA International has endorsed efforts to solidify Records and Information Managers as a Standard Occupational Classification through the U.S. Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics, records management remains unrecognized as a formal profession. The closest occupations are Administrative Services Managers and File Clerks, neither of which sufficiently reflect the nature and expanse of records managers' work today.[92] While acknowledged, archivists are grouped together with curators and museum technicians. The job description includes an ironic note that specializing in

[86] "The Institute of Certified Records Managers," ICRM, http://www.icrm.org/, accessed 3 April 2011.

[87] "About the ACA/Contact Us," Academy of Certified Archivists, http://www.certifiedarchivists.org/about-us/about-the-aca.html, accessed 3 April 2011.

[88] Paul R. Scott, "Distribution of Certified Records Professionals in the United States and the World," *ACA News* 72 (Winter 2011): 9.

[89] "Qualifying for the Examination," ICRM, http://db.icrm.org/crm/index.jsp?submit_menu=155, accessed 3 April 2011. The ICRM does not require a particular field of study, but does impose strict definitions of acceptable work experience. Two years of additional experience may substitute for one year of education. ICRM's website indicates that a high school graduate may qualify to sit for the CRM exam with eleven years of professional experience. Such an option accommodates the self-taught records managers who entered the profession without formal training, but may prove unnecessary if formalized records management education takes root.

[90] "Academy of Certified Archivists Examination Application for Certified Archivist," http://certifiedarchivists.org/images/forms/application.pdf, accessed 3 April 2011. Alternatively, a master's degree without archival concentration is accepted with two years of professional experience. Compared to the ICRM, the ACA has more stringent educational requirements in that it prefers archival concentration, but offers less detail as to what constitutes acceptable work experience. The ICRM cannot require records management concentration because such education does not exist.

[91] "Preparing for the CRM Examination: A Handbook," ICRM, http://www.icrm.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/06/CRM_Exam_Preparation_Handbook_061611.pdf, and "Handbook for Archival Certification," ACA, http://www.certifiedarchivists.org/images/forms/handbook.pdf, both accessed 2 July 2011.

[92] "Occupational Outlook Handbook, 2010–2011 Edition," Bureau of Labor Statistics, http://www.bls.gov/oco/ocos002.htm and http://www.bls.gov/oco/ocos146.htm, both accessed 3 April 2011.

electronic records or records management will increase an archivist's prospects for a better job.[93]

The U.S. Office of Personnel Management, which classifies occupations within the federal government, acknowledges archivists as distinct from museum curators, but groups records management within the Support Services Administration Series.[94] The lack of professional recognition reveals lingering evidence of records managers' ancestry in paraprofessional endeavors and stands as an obstacle to the advancement of the records management field.

Conclusion

The archival profession in the United States is older than records management and has a stronger foundation in terms of professional identity and standardized education. But archivists *need* records managers and records managers do not necessarily need archivists. Or perhaps the need is mutual, but records managers do not always realize it. Maybe records managers have a stronger need for information technologists, who might not perceive a need for records managers. Records managers, after all, strive for systematic records destruction, while information technologists make false promises of perpetual storage and access. Archivists, meanwhile, want to believe that their perspective is essential to the mix, but probably will not be invited to the table unless they figure out some answers, which really cannot happen until they have a place at the table. As archivists and records managers continue to define themselves in the tension of their overlapping responsibilities, they now do so within the domain of information technology. With information technologists at the head of the electronic records table, both archivists and records managers must prove their relevance to join in the discussion.

[93] "Occupational Outlook Handbook, 2010–2011 Edition," Bureau of Labor Statistics, http://www.bls.gov/oco/ocos065.htm, accessed 3 April 2011.

[94] "Position Classification Standard for Archivist Series GS-1420," http://www.opm.gov/fedclass/gs1420.pdf and "Position Classification Standard for Support Services Administration Series, GS-0342," http://www.opm.gov/fedclass/gs0342.pdf, both accessed 3 April 2011.