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Forever young: educating today's youth about the nature and uses of records of enduring value

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FOREVER YOUNG:
EDUCATING TODAY'S YOUTH
ABOUT THE NATURE AND USES
OF RECORDS OF ENDURING VALUE

By

Rozlind Koester

Accepted in Partial Fulfillment
Of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts

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MASTER'S THESIS

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Rozlind Koester

August 17, 2011

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FOREVER YOUNG:
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A Thesis
Presented to
The Faculty of
Western Washington University

In Partial Fulfillment
Of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts

By Rozlind Koester
November 2008

ABSTRACT

This thesis identifies an urgent need for new archival outreach methods that encourage younger audiences to use archival materials at all stages of their lives. In Chapter One, the author argues that traditional archival outreach methods fail to produce an adult population that is "archives literate" regarding the nature and myriad uses of archival materials. As a result, archives lack the social and cultural place that is enjoyed by their sister institutions: libraries and museums. This suggests that new outreach methods are needed, and Chapter Two explores some innovative, existing programs that target young people by getting them to use archives in educational arenas. In Chapter Three, the author outlines a framework consisting of six criteria to be considered during the design and implementation of new educational programs. The framework is applicable to institutions of all sizes and scopes. The thesis concludes by identifying challenges for further research into the area of educational outreach, as well as this author's hopes for the future of archival literacy among individuals of all ages.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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A PROFESSIONAL MANDATE FOR

ARCHIVAL OUTREACH PROGRAMS

Archival outreach programs are a form of advocacy. In addition to encouraging use, they can also improve the overall image of archives within society, and foster the public's understanding of and appreciation for archival records. Today, archivists are emancipating themselves from a passive, custodial role in which they are mere keepers of records, opting instead to take a proactive stance to nearly all archival processes from selection and appraisal to arrangement and description to education and outreach. Furthermore, we understand that the records in our care are more than just old documents reminding us of times long past. Rather, archival materials are of current value as well, carrying information about people and institutions throughout our country and across the globe. Former Archivist of the United States, John W. Carlin, stresses that an archives "…is not a dusty hoard of ancient history. It is a public trust on which democracy depends."[1] This underscores an essential professional responsibility that archivists too often overlook: to educate and inform society while also promoting a sound democracy.

We must look far beyond the antiquated image of archivists as mere handmaidens of history, and instead envision ourselves as purveyors of truth and justice or, quite literally, "archivist as activist." Bruce Montgomery argues that

> The archival community, and indeed all its allied professions, must be ever vigilant in helping to ensure that American citizens have all the requisite information to make informed decisions…[2]

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[1] John W. Carlin, quoted in Tom Nesmith, "Seeing Archives: Postmodernism and the Changing Intellectual Place of Archives," *American Archivist* 65 (Spring/Summer 2002): 33.

[2] Bruce Montgomery, quoted in Randall C. Jimerson, "Archives for All: Professional Responsibility and Social Justice," *American Archivist* 70 (Fall/Winter 2007): 53.

Our fundamental mission as archivists is to make clear to people how information and power are interrelated. Records hold evidence of actions and transactions, and those who control that evidence, whether for good or for evil, wield a great deal of power. Richard J. Cox and David A. Wallace point out that

> Records are not only artifacts for use by historians and genealogists… they are also essential sources of evidence and information providing the glue that holds together, and sometimes the agent that unravels, organizations, governments, communities, and societies.[3]

In that same vein, Elisabeth Kaplan stresses that "[the] power over the evidence of representation, and the power over access to it, endows us with some measure of power over history…"[4] We must teach society that records directly serve the public interest, while also informing people of where to find and how to use the information that lives in records.

There are numerous examples both in the United States and throughout the world that demonstrate the power of archives to do good or ill through the control of information. The Iran-Contra Affair of the late 1970s and early 1980s illustrates how records were used to expose an international scandal and ultimately hold United States government officials accountable for their illegal actions. David A. Wallace describes "the critical roles played by documents in enabling, documenting, and obfuscating" the three investigations following the scandal which resulted in several criminal prosecutions and convictions. Wallace concludes that

> Document creation, use, circulation, and disposal are deeply embedded in organizational activities – even covert actions that require the strongest confidentiality and secrecy. Information control… became evident in the

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[3] Richard J. Cox and David A. Wallace, "Introduction," in *Archives and the Public Good: Accountability and Records in Modern Society* (Westport, CT: Quorum Books 2002): vii.
[4] Elisabeth Kaplan, quoted in Randall C. Jimerson, "Embracing the Power of Archives," *American Archivist* 69 (Spring/Summer 2006): 23-24.

battle over access during investigations and criminal proceedings. The "conclusions" and "historical lessons" and criminal convictions that would be possible depended in great part on obtaining access to information.

Although the investigations were hindered in part due to poor record-keeping practices and even the deliberate suppression of some relevant documents, it was ultimately the evidence provided in correspondence, emails, and personal notes that exposed the scandal, and allowed for the prosecution of its major participants.[5]

Verne Harris describes how the manipulation of records can be used for ill, referring to the apartheid regime in South Africa in the latter half of the twentieth century. Harris recounts that public records were secreted away through excessive legislation and other roadblocks which restricted the public's access to information about their government. The apartheid regime was therefore rendered opaque and not subject to the same standards of accountability that we come to expect in democratic societies. Harris also refers to a "systematic forgetting engineered by the state" or a "state-imposed amnesia" in which documentation was either sequestered or routinely sanitized in order to keep information from the incoming, democratic government. As a result, records detailing, for example, the dispossession of individuals' and communities' rights to land were lost, further obstructing future efforts to undo the wrongs of the apartheid regime.[6]

These are just two examples from among many that demonstrate the power of records to shape, uphold, and sometimes undermine democratic societies.[7] Such evidence suggests that, in addition to demonstrating their value as historical resources, archivists as

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[5] David A. Wallace, "Implausible Deniability: The Politics of Documents in the Iran-Contra Affair and Its Investigations," in Richard J. Cox and David A. Wallace, eds., *Archives and the Public Good*: 95.
[6] Verne Harris, "They Should Have Destroyed More: The Destruction of Public Records by the South African State in the Final Years of Apartheid, 1990-1994," in Richard J. Cox and David A. Wallace, eds., *Archives and the Public Good*: 205.
[7] See, for example, Richard J. Cox and David A. Wallace, eds., *Archives and the Public Good*, and Margaret Proctor, Michael Cook, and Caroline Williams, eds., *Political Pressure and the Archival Record* (Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 2005).

activists must inform society about this social power of archives. At no time in history has this need been more urgent, both within the archival profession as well as the larger information field. The Association of College and Research Libraries suggests that

> the uncertain quality and expanding quantity of information pose large challenges for society. The sheer abundance of information will not in itself create a more informed citizenry without a complementary cluster of abilities necessary to use information effectively.[8]

The mere presence of archival repositories will not guarantee their survival in today's information economy. It is their contribution and connection to the larger activity of information dissemination that imbues archives and archivists with a social imperative beyond simply the care of historical records.

To ensure that archival institutions are not swept up in the pace of modern life, we should embrace a broad professional mandate to contribute more actively to the overall education of society with regards to information. What is needed is a broad form of "archival literacy," which can be understood as an extension of the more general term "information literacy." The notion of information literacy was outlined in 2000 by the Association of College and Research Libraries, as "…a set of abilities requiring individuals to recognize when information is needed and have the ability to locate, evaluate, and use effectively the needed information."[9] Archival literacy, therefore, would include the aforementioned abilities, and also an understanding about archives, specifically, as sources of objective information about individuals and society, both in the past as well as the present.

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[8] Association of College and Research Libraries, "Information literacy competency standards for higher education," http://www.ala.org/acrl/ilcomstan.html (accessed November 17, 2008).
[9] *Ibid.*

Furthermore, archival literacy implies a greater comprehension of the myriad uses of archives, in that they provide both a basis for historical scholarship, and are a means for accountability, government transparency, and sound democracies. This kind of holistic understanding about archives is sorely needed, but currently lacking among a large segment of society. Making these kinds of connections about records and information requires that individuals become familiar with archives in a number of ways throughout their lives. Moreover, it is time for archivists to re-evaluate our existing relationship with the public by cultivating new users and encouraging an inherent respect from society for archives, archival programs, and the power of information in general. We should not be satisfied with the status quo; rather we should market ourselves, our field, our craft, and our records. The responsibility for spreading archival literacy lies with us: the archivists. The time has come to embrace this activist role.

Perhaps the biggest obstacle preventing a large part of the public from understanding or using records is that they have, generally, a really vague understanding about what, exactly, archives are. Furthermore, even those already familiar with archival materials often possess a flawed, even negative image of such records. Every archivist will of course groan at the inaccurate image of brittle, yellowing documents hidden away in the dusty shadows of dank basements. True, we can blame much of that stereotype on the media's depiction of archives in popular culture, but we must also accept that some of the responsibility is ours. The fact of the matter is that archivists have been ineffective in our outreach efforts. Perhaps a lack of adequate funding and staff time are some of the reasons that outreach programs are often given a lower priority, or perhaps there is a sense that the public should intuitively know about archives, and those without that

knowledge should not enter our repositories in the first place. However, to ensure the health and continued growth of our profession we must cease making excuses for ourselves and instead make outreach and public programming a priority.

Furthermore, it is also time that we re-examine traditional archival outreach methods and their effectiveness for educating the public about our work. The concept of archival outreach is by no means a new one. Professional writing on the subject has increased within the past two decades, indicating the emergence of outreach as a popular theme in current theoretical discourse. There are certainly plenty of manuals and handbooks that give general directions for conducting traditional outreach programs within various types of institutions.[10] Unfortunately, most of this discourse fails to recognize that society's lack of understanding about archival materials is primarily due to the absence of archives in the lives and education of today's youth. Timothy Ericson, a professor of information studies and former Society of American Archivists president, reminds us to "bear in mind that if people do not know what archivists are, or what they do, it is simply because archivists have not touched their lives in any meaningful way."[11] The fact that archives lack a significant presence in the lives of young people is a fundamental if, albeit, inconvenient truth.

The youth of today are, quite simply, ignorant about the nature of archival materials, indeed, often ignorant of their very existence. Furthermore, those few young people who know about the archival record are either confused about how to use primary documents or, as is too often the case, given little opportunity to do so. Textbooks are

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[10] See, for example, Elsie Freeman Finch, ed., *Advocating Archives: An Introduction to Public Relations for Archivists* (Lanham, MD: The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 2003), and Martin R. Kafaltovic, *Creating a Winning Online Exhibition* (Chicago: American Library Association, 2002).

[11] Timothy L. Ericson, "Preoccupied with our own gardens: Outreach and Archivists," *Archivaria* 31 (Winter 1990-91): 120.

still the most popular source for education in classrooms, outside of which young people too often turn to television and the internet for information. The void created by this lack of archival understanding among young people resonates loudly within the archival profession. The absence of primary source documents in the lives of youngsters also represents a fundamental weakness within educational curriculum, which has led Elsie Finch, who is both archivist and educator, to contend that "history is alive and well in this country everywhere but in the classroom."[12] The result is that the majority of society is really quite illiterate with regards to archives.

We can, in large part, blame tepid social and fiscal support for archival programs on this lack of archival literacy among adults. However, because young people ultimately represent the future users and supporters of archives, they must be shown how to understand and appreciate archives earlier in their lives. That way, those in the archival field will have an easier time advocating for their collections and justifying the need for continued funding in the future. Archivists must seek out, cultivate, and encourage younger audiences to use the records which we archivists hold in so much esteem. Just as individuals learn to read, write, and conduct research thanks to education they receive throughout their life, so should society become archives-literate through the presence of primary sources in educational programming. Our ultimate goal is to create a society which understands the multiple, often overlapping uses of archival materials. A presence in the early lives of individuals will allow archivists to impart this knowledge by emphasizing both the historical and social importance of archival records.

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[12] Elsie Finch, "Education Programs: Outreach as an Administrative Function," *American Archivist* 41, 2 (April 1978): 149.

The first chapter of this thesis begins with a survey of traditional outreach methods, followed by a critical analysis of how those methods resonate with different user-groups in various ways. This introspective look into our profession ultimately demonstrates that students at the elementary, secondary, and college level are left out of archival public programming because, as Ann Pederson points out, "…unlike libraries and museums, visits to archives are not a feature of one's early life or education."[13] Younger audiences have been ignored, whether consciously or not, by archival public programming, and therefore young people, and ultimately most adults, are unaware of the nature and myriad uses of archival materials. Chapter One demonstrates how most traditional outreach methods fail to touch younger audiences in any meaningful way.

It is imperative that archivists close this knowledge-gap if we can ever hope to enjoy a thoroughly archives-savvy public. Fortunately, many large institutions and some small, innovative local repositories are designing outreach programs that specifically target younger audiences. Chapter Two outlines a number of educational programs administered at local, regional, and national levels. The information is based primarily on personal interviews with archival administrators and educators, combined with some online research. Examining these diverse programs demonstrates how institutions of all sizes and scopes can become involved in advocating archives to younger audiences. Furthermore, anecdotal evidence from those interviewed strongly suggests that these programs are in fact working. That is, they are getting students to understand the nature of archives and their many uses, both inside and outside of the classroom.

Chapter Two looks, in particular, at an emerging trend within both the archival and education fields that involves using primary source documents to supplement

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[13] Ann Pederson, *Keeping Archives* (Sydney: Australian Society of Archivists, Inc. 1987): 311.

curriculum. This trend suggests an emerging partnership between the archival and education fields, and an evolving unity between archivists, educators, students, administrators, and even parents. The examples discussed in this chapter prove that the educational arena is indeed one of the most promising for promoting knowledge about the nature and uses of primary sources. Additionally, using documents in classrooms appears to improve the quality of education in general by developing students' analytical and reasoning skills. Also, perhaps most significant, this strategy gets students to begin to understand the broader social implications of records as fundamental tools for a sound democracy, and this knowledge continues developing well into adulthood.

In Chapter Three the author outlines a framework for successful educational programs which archival institutions of all sizes and scopes can implement. The framework consists of six criteria to take into consideration when designing educational outreach programs. For those who are convinced that this kind of outreach is necessary, Chapter Three presents a realistic starting point for developing new programs. Many of the conclusions explained in this chapter are based on advice obtained from the directors and administrators of the programs outlined in Chapter Two, in addition to this author's own analysis of those programs. As our profession continues to solidify, increase in numbers and visibility, we must continue to raise awareness about the real significance of our work to the public good. Ultimately, those who read this thesis should gain a sense of urgency to create outreach programs that target younger audiences, and the final chapter provides a practical methodology for doing so.

CHAPTER ONE:

THE FAILURE OF TRADITIONAL ARCHIVAL

OUTREACH TO IMPACT TODAY'S YOUTH

Over the past few decades, archival outreach has been explored and written about in a number of articles, handbooks, and manuals. Many traditional archival outreach methods mirror those of libraries and museums, while others are unique to our field just as archives themselves are unique. This chapter explores some of the most popular methods for educating the public about archival materials, and encouraging their use. What ultimately becomes clear is that younger audiences are almost always excluded from archival public programming. Activities such as exhibits, displays, open houses, workshops, and anniversary events are generally tailored for adult audiences already possessing an inherent appreciation for history. The following analysis demonstrates how most traditional outreach methods currently fail to establish an archival presence in the early lives of potential users. This conclusion suggests that new outreach methods are needed, and that they should focus, to a great extent, on reaching out to younger audiences.

In order to critique popular archival outreach methods we must first ask ourselves, "what constitutes a good outreach program?" and, furthermore, "why is it essential that every archives have at least some kind of outreach agenda?" Gabrielle Blais and David Enns explain that

> public programming has four components. It supports the activities of
> the institution by creating an image of archives, promoting awareness and
> appreciation of archives, ensuring the education of users and the general

public about the value and potential use of archives, and enabling use of the archival record.[1]

Outreach programs, therefore, are not merely about showcasing our individual collections to promote increased use and secured funding for our own institutions' activities. Public programs serve the entire professional field by enhancing the public's understanding and opinion of archival materials and their societal value. It is important to remember that any given outreach program does not merely serve the individual repository which implements the program. Rather, outreach at any level impacts the entire archival field by correcting the multitude of inaccurate and often negative stereotypes about archives and archivists. We must bury, once and for all, the notion that archives are simply old, dusty documents secreted away by gray-haired, bespectacled stack trolls. Professional archivists must look beyond their own repositories and consider how their outreach programs serve the greater good by advocating for the entire profession and creating a positive image of archives.

Archival outreach is not a revolutionary idea. Archivists have developed numerous strategies to promote their collections, educate others about the nature and various uses of archival materials and, in doing so, attract more users (and potentially more funding) to their institutions. Many of the methods that invite a wider public to view, appreciate, and potentially use archival materials are similar to those practiced by archives' sister institutions, specifically museums and libraries. These kinds of institutions have long nurtured a positive relationship with the public. In turn, they enjoy the fruits of that labor such as frequent use, avid support and, at least relative to archival institutions, generally sufficient funding. Visits to museums and libraries are also

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[1] Gabrielle Blais and David Enns. "From Paper Archives to People Archives: Public Programming in the Management of Archives," *Archivaria* 31 (Winter 1990-1991): 103.

common activities for individuals of all ages, including young children. Throughout their early lives, individuals become literate in the use of libraries and museums for scholarship, recreation, and community life, and so rarely do adults express confusion or skepticism about those institutions, or the materials found within their walls. Unlike libraries and museums, however, archives are rarely, if ever, a class field trip destination, and so they remain mysterious and elusive to individuals both young and old.

Wisely, those in the archival profession often borrow strategies from museums and libraries when designing outreach programs. For example, exhibits which highlight an institution's holdings are common outreach methods in museums and libraries. Exhibits are a way to bring materials out of the stacks and expose them to the public while still ensuring their protection and integrity. Of course, archival repositories also conduct exhibits. Ann Pederson notes that "[e]xhibitions provide a vehicle for the archives to show off its collection[s] and help fulfill the archives' wider mission of encouraging public respect and appreciation for past achievements."[2] It should be noted here that the preservation and care of records is on of the primary responsibilities of archival institutions, and any excessive physical handling of materials can present a danger to the integrity of archival materials. However, because exhibits are almost by definition in a controlled, enclosed space, they can be seen by large audiences while still protecting rare documents from actual physical contact.

There are plenty of opportunities for showcasing exhibits, and significant historical events are probably the most obvious. Pederson explains that "[t]here is…an advantage in clustering activities around a major event or point in time. A local [event] presents a good opportunity for the archives to attract wider publicity and a larger

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[2] Ann Pederson, *Keeping Archives* (Sydney: Australian Society of Archivists, Inc. 1987): 319.

audience…"[3] Exhibits with historical themes likely appeal to historians and scholars who already have an inherent appreciation for the past. Furthermore, elder and senior groups whose members perhaps lived through the event being celebrated might have an emotional connection to it and, therefore, an increased interest and appreciation for both the exhibit and the institution which sponsors it. Exhibits celebrating significant anniversaries or centenary events for the community or region often attract a wider, more general audience with a more superficial appreciation for history. Once these individuals enter the archives, however, and witness first hand the mystery of history that is found within primary source documents, their superficial interest may in fact blossom into something more profound.

Unfortunately, it is unlikely that younger people, especially children and teenagers, can get truly excited about milestones such as these. College and graduate students who already have a heightened interest in history might appreciate exhibits that highlight important dates, but younger children usually do not possess such an internalized historical appreciation. In the field of museum outreach, exhibits are often considered one of the most promising ways of introducing children to history. But museums feature artifacts, three-dimensional representations arranged in spaces that encourage viewers to move through and around the material, often in an interactive way. To a young, impressionable viewer, this visceral experience is probably more exciting than exhibits featuring two-dimensional documents behind glass encasements, as would generally be the case with an archival exhibit. Exhibits featuring current events or pop culture themes may appeal to a younger audience, but archival materials of this nature are

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[3] *Ibid*: 318.

of course limited, so exhibits are, for the most part, an inappropriate outreach method for targeting a more youthful audience.

Archivists are increasingly, if reluctantly, embracing the technological revolution that has defined recent decades. There is no denying the suspicion with which we approach electronic records, and our constant struggle with technological obsolescence makes many an archivist wary of considering technology a trusted friend of the archives. This revolution is not all bad though! We have witnessed how online search engines make html and xml finding aids available to users regardless of their physical separation from the archives. Archivists can similarly reach an enormous virtual audience by showcasing exhibits online. Martin Kalfatovic posits that

> with the advent of the Internet and the ability to create online exhibitions, the constraints of space and time (and to some extent money) no longer hinder libraries and archives in the creation of exhibitions that will accomplish the same goals on an even grander scale.[4]

Moreover, if one goal of outreach is to connect with as large an audience as possible, then online exhibits are potentially a dynamic tool.

There are, however, a couple of important facts to take into account when considering the potential for online exhibits to reach younger audiences. First of all, there may be, understandably, an assumption that outreach via the Internet will be more effective with a younger, computer-savvy audience. Research has shown, however, that online exhibits, like their onsite exhibit counterparts, generally attract a narrower audience. In a 1999 study of museum websites, Jonathan P. Bowen found that the "average age of people visiting museum web pages is between forty and sixty-four

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[4] Martin R. Kalfatovic, *Creating a Winning Online Exhibition* (Chicago: American Library Association 2002): xv.

years,"[5] so it is probably safe to assume that, generally speaking, the same is true for archival websites. Also, threats to individual privacy and identity, combined with the pervasiveness of questionable social networking sites and violent online games, have led many parents to restrict children's personal computer use. Furthermore, although classrooms may allow for supervised, educational computer use, they are not always equipped with computers for each child. This is certainly the case with schools in economically struggling districts, a demographic that certainly must not be left out of archival public programming.

Workshops that offer education about constructing genealogies or doing house histories are also a popular way of inviting the public into an archival repository and encouraging them to use archival materials. However, this author's past experience has shown that most often the individuals that participate in such activities are already regulars at the archives, or are at least involved, to some extent, with the broader historical community. These individuals already possess an appreciation for history and an understanding of archives and archival research. Also, because workshops almost always happen as day- or weekend-long events, children and teenagers can hardly be expected to sign up since their free time is already relatively limited. Furthermore, workshops are oftentimes designed under the assumption that the audience has at least a cursory understanding of archives, as time is not spent explaining in detail the nature of archival materials and basic archival theory. In general, such opportunities do not appear to have any real potential for attracting younger audiences.

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[5] Jonathan P. Bowen, "The Time for Renovations: A Survey of Museum Web Sites," (1999) in Kalfatovic, *Creating a Winning Online Exhibition*: 96.

On the other hand, contact, cooperation, and coordination with the media present outreach opportunities that can increase awareness and understanding about archives to a potentially vast audience including, perhaps, youngsters. For example, Ann Pederson suggests that, "[w]orking through the media, the archivist is able to minimize costs, obtain wider coverage and deliver more professionally packaged messages…"[6] In a time when the typical American spends an average of three hours watching television every day, archival professionals would be wise to seize the opportunity for targeting that audience. Kathleen Epp suggests that

> [for] [t]he archival profession, which has often lamented the relatively small proportion of society which actually enters an archives and directly uses archival holdings, wide-ranging 'access' to archival documents through television presents an important opportunity to increase and improve the visibility and role of archives and archivists in society.[7]

Historical programs on television and the rising popularity of historical epics on the silver screen certainly demonstrate an increased appreciation of the past by the public. However, these programs, like exhibits, anniversaries, and centenary events, often only appeal to an older audience with an already internalized appreciation for history. It is doubtful that an average middle- or high-school student would opt to sit through Ken Burns' *Civil War* saga when watching television at home after a long day at school.

Television programs and historically accurate feature films may be, however, appropriate in a classroom setting as a supplement to historical curriculum. They are certainly a promising way of getting information from primary source documents to filter into classrooms if, albeit, indirectly. However, unless the teacher of the class or director/producer of the program takes the time to explain the nature of archival materials

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[6] Pederson: 327.
[7] Kathleen Epp, "Telling Stories around the Electronic Campfire: The Use of Archives in Television Productions," *Archivaria* 49 (2000): 54.

and, especially, how they contributed to the research behind the historical program, then

such a method is not useful for increasing awareness among children about the

fundamentals of archives. If the ultimate goal is to produce an archives-literate society,

then students need to understand how primary sources provide evidence to support the

writing of such programs. It is up to the teachers, then to provide that context, but without

the deliberate intervention and assistance of an archival professional, the information

necessary to make those connections will not be available.

  The preceding analysis of traditional outreach methods clearly demonstrates that,

whether consciously or not, younger audiences have been ignored by archival public

programming. Anne Gilliland-Swetland points out that

> Children, in particular, are often excluded from archival [public]
> programming because they are perceived as lacking the cognitive and
> educational tools to comprehend or work effectively with primary sources
> or finding aids, and sometimes because they might even pose a physical
> threat to the collections.[8]

The notion of children posing a threat to archival materials is not an over-statement.

During a workshop at the May 2008 Northwest Archivists Annual Meeting, participants

brainstormed some of the pros and cons of getting students to work with archives. Some

of the negatives included

- Takes lots of time and hand holding;
- Impatience with using collections;
- Preservation concerns;
- Noisy;
- Needy, needy, needy;
- Challenging tough crowd that likes to wander;
- Difficult to manage as a group;
- Security issues.[9]

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[8] Anne Gilliland-Swetland, "An Exploration of K-12 User Needs for Digital Primary Source Materials," *American Archivist* 61 (Spring 1998): 137.
[9] Danna Bell-Russel, "Teaching with Primary Sources" (workshop, Northwest Archivists Annual Meeting, May 28, 2008).

Everything from sticky fingers to their tendency to be rash and feisty to the potential for them to bend or tear documents makes many archivists wary of letting youngsters work with original documents. Furthermore, the difficulty teachers have with classroom management suggests that students in, for example, an archives research room may be disruptive and even drive other patrons away.

Due to the skepticism with which many archivists approach young people, it is not surprising that when these youngsters become adults they do not accurately understand the nature of archives, nor do they take advantage of their many uses. They were never given any opportunity to acquire this knowledge! The key question here is: what kinds of public programming will touch younger audiences and ultimately produce an archives-literate society? There are, of course, ways of introducing children and teenagers to archives without endangering the materials because outreach programs need not all entail that children actually handle the original documents. Digitization, in particular, enables us to duplicate documents and disseminate them across great distances without threatening the records themselves. Furthermore, through educational programs children can learn the cognitive tools necessary to understand archival materials, and therefore treat them with psychological as well as physical respect.

Today, most archivists strive to be proactive rather than reactive, and nowhere is this more imperative than in the realm of archival outreach that targets today's youth. Ideally, educating younger audiences about the nature and uses of primary resources will produce an adult population already familiar with the nature and uses of archives. Just as children are taught early in life to treat library books with care and to not touch the artifacts on display at local museums, they should also internalize a respect for archives

as precious documents with both historical and social importance. Children must not be considered a threat to archives or archival materials, indeed leaving them out of the picture presents a greater danger. After all, the children are the future. Archivists must take action to ensure that the youth of today create a future in which archival programs enjoy the same level of support that society already gives to libraries and museums.

CHAPTER TWO:

INNOVATIVE OUTREACH PROGRAMS

THAT TARGET YOUNGER AUDIENCES

A very direct way to introduce archival materials to younger audiences is by integrating primary sources into educational programs and, more specifically, by using them as part of history and social studies curriculum. Many archivists at the forefront of archival outreach and education are examining this possibility. For example, Elsie Finch, the former head of education at the National Archives and Records Administration, suggests that

> working to improve the teaching of history could benefit… the archival profession, whose business is history and whose clientele could profit from understanding the nature of documentation and the value of saving and using documents. A presence in the education community could serve this purpose.[1]

Likewise, Anne Gilliland-Swetland of the University of California, Los Angeles, points out that

> Addressing the educational needs of K-12 communities represents an unparalleled opportunity for archivists to a) expand the relevance of archival repositories within society; [and] b) begin to grow a 'records literate' as well as 'information literate' audience that is aware of the importance, relevance, and complexities of records…[2]

Finch and Gilliland-Swetland represent some of the premier experts in the field of archival outreach through education. They are professional archivists who had the foresight to identify education as an avenue for promoting archival cognition among young people.

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[1] Elsie Finch, "Making Sure They Want It: Managing Successful Public Programs," *American Archivist* 56 (Winter 1993): 71.

[2] Anne Gilliland-Swetland, "An Exploration of K-12 User Needs for Digital Primary Source Materials," *American Archivist* 61 (Spring 1998): p. 137.

Educational specialists are also taking note of the potential for primary sources to improve teaching. David Kobrin, a professor of education at Brown University, is well aware that primary sources are lacking from public school classrooms, and he believes that their absence actually weakens curriculum. Kobrin points out the danger of relying solely on historical textbooks to educate children about history and social studies:

> Although a tone of authority pervades textbook narratives, producing history textbooks has always been, and remains, susceptible to contemporary pressures. Like the history of curriculum development in general, the interpretations and content in history textbooks more often reflect social and cultural factors at the time of writing… than advances in knowledge about the subject. … [T]he central problem with textbooks [is]: they make students think there is only one true and accurate account of the past…

And while Kobrin is also quick to point out the obvious value of textbooks (primarily their ease of use and affordability) he concludes that, ultimately, students should be encouraged to construct history as a learning technique through the analysis of documents, primary sources, and artifacts.[3]

Fortunately, many of these forward-thinking archivists and educators have already designed and implemented successful programs in the United States and elsewhere. These programs demonstrate how, through creativity, innovation, and collaboration, curriculum projects are gradually bringing archives into classrooms. The mere presence of these existing programs does not, however, alleviate the responsibility to continue promoting archival education within our profession. Even some national programs like those at the National Archives and Records Administration and the Library of Congress are underutilized. That is why it is essential for individuals among all kinds of

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[3] David Kobrin, *Beyond the Textbook: Teaching History Using Documents and Primary Sources* (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann 1996): 3-5.

repositories to take up the cause of archival outreach through education. Archivists as activists must ensure that we reach as wide an audience as possible.

A good example of an educational program that encourages the use of archival materials is the National History Day program. John J. Grabowski explains that "this program's intent is to introduce students to the 'stuff' of history,"[4] and what are archives if not the stuff of history? The program offers a scholarly competition for high school students. It encourages scholarship that uses, to a great extent, primary sources, while at the same time presenting opportunities for learning in a fun, competitive environment. Although the program focuses primarily on using archives to do history, the analytical thinking skills that are developed by doing this kind of primary source research imbue students with a greater knowledge about the nature of information in general. These young audiences are shown how archives serve as unbiased evidence of past events from which, through critical analysis, they can form their own conclusions. This is precisely the kind of knowledge that, when fostered at an early age among individuals, will contribute to more archives-literate society in the future.

Participation in National History Day is optional for high school teenagers, and they are therefore likely to view participation quite differently than their regular classroom activities. The program offers cash rewards and scholarships, which represent tangible returns on students' educational investments. Also, because parent volunteers are invited to help facilitate these competitions, National History Day can potentially educate parents about the creative and academic uses of archival materials through the scholarly endeavors of their children. Archivists should nurture relationships with participants of

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[4] John J. Grabowski, "Keepers, Users, and Funders: Building an Awareness of Archival Value," in Randall C. Jimerson, ed., *American Archival Studies: Reading in Theory and Practice* (Chicago: Society of American Archivists 2000): 624.

the program by volunteering to mentor or judge at competitions in their own area, and even promote their collections as possible resources for History Day competitors.

National History Day happens once a year with competitions at a local level, the winners of which advance to the state and national competitions. Students conduct extensive research related to the annual theme, and they present their finding in one of four formats: exhibits, documentaries, performances, or papers. The theme for 2009 is "The Individual in History." [5] The program's motto is "It's not just a day… it's an experience," and the skills developed during the competition resonate throughout students' educational and professional careers. For example, Tim Hoogland, Director of Education Outreach at the Minnesota Historical Society and a National History Day mentor, found that students reported their research skills had "improved greatly" by participating in the event, and seventy-eight percent believed those skills would carry over into other classes. Furthermore, Hoogland explains that "[h]undreds of History Day researchers use archival collections on an annual basis and… classroom programs help introduce students to the value of archival collections."[6] His experience is testament to National History Day's success in getting students to understand and use primary sources to find information.

At the national level, the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) offers a number of educational programs that encourage both teachers and young people to utilize archival resources as historical resources. NARA correctly identifies primary sources as a means to encourage analytical thinking among students. Studying original documents forces them to critically evaluate the evidence and form their own conclusions

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[5] National History Day, http://www.nationalhistoryday.org/ (accessed October 7, 2008).
[6] University of Minnesota, "National History Day in Minnesota, 2006 Mentor Student Survey," (2000).

about historical events as opposed to having a pre-determined set of facts presented to them via a textbook. Unfortunately, nowhere in their literature does NARA discuss the many other uses for original records, such as their ability to provide evidence supporting institutional and government accountability. NARA focuses almost exclusively on the historical value of archives. As one of the largest repositories of original records in the country, NARA should recognize the urgent need for archival literacy within society, and use their educational programs to cultivate this knowledge.

The Education Program at the National Archives began in the late 1970s to "promote the use of primary sources in the classroom, produce engaging and teachable document-based materials, and demonstrate active-learning techniques that bring documents to life for students at every level."[7] Some of the programs are specifically aimed at getting teachers to use primary sources by providing training on how to do so. Other programs involve initiatives to provide online access to digital materials for both students and educators to use in the classroom. Still other projects focus specifically on educating students about NARA's holdings, with a focus on national history and the history of democracy in the United States. NARA also has active outreach programs that encourage on-site visits to pique children's interest in archival programs.

NARA's Digital Classroom is an online gateway for educators, administrators, and students. It is basically a portal through which individuals can access the myriad resources provided by NARA. The website offers an eleven minute-long video titled "Democracy Starts Here," which explains to viewers how records contribute to our American democracy by documenting family, citizenship, war, diplomacy, people, and

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[7] National Archives and Records Administration, "Teachers and Educators," http://www.archives.gov/education/ (accessed June 5, 2008).

patriotism in our country.[8] Among the other resources provided through this site are

information about training opportunities for both educators and researchers, instructions

for classes visiting the National Archives, links to regionally-based programs sponsored

by NARA, as well as lesson plans and a vast number of primary source documents that

have been made available online. The Digital Classroom also offers a guide to the

Archival Research Catalog (ARC) with instructions and suggestions for using the index

to find relevant primary sources from among NARA's billions of paper documents and

photographs.[9]

NARA leads the field in providing training opportunities for teachers which they

make available in a variety of ways. For example, for nearly three decades NARA has

offered a program called "Primarily Teaching," which takes place during the summer

months in presidential libraries across the nation. The workshops are generally five days

long, usually Monday through Friday, and seem affordable at $100 per session. The

sessions educate teachers about how to create their own document-based curriculum by

providing classes in archival research, and instruction in how to use documents as

teaching tools. NARA also provides on-site training at local school districts, if the

districts are able to cover travel expenses. Through videoconferencing technology, they

are able to provide training for those without the means to travel to or from D.C. [10]

NARA also encourages classes to make field trips to the National Archives and,

although they do have specific rules regarding appropriate behavior, they are generally

reasonable. For example, student groups may be no larger than ten individuals with one

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[8] National Archives and Records Administration, "Democracy Starts Here,"
http://videocast.nih.gov/sla/NARA/dsh/broadband.html (accessed October 27, 2008).
[9] National Archives and Records Administration, "Teachers and Educators."
[10] *Ibid.*

chaperone assigned per group, and therefore larger groups must be divided. No chewing

gum, eating or drinking are allowed on the premises, although this does not differ too

greatly from what the students are used to in their normal classroom setting.

Understandably, excessively disruptive students will be asked to leave the facility, and

the group may face problems in the future if they wish to return.[11] All these rules seem

relatively common sense, as this behavior is consistent with that required in museums

and/or libraries, places with which most students are already familiar.

NARA also provides digital copies of archival materials that correspond with

lesson plans created by NARA professionals to supplement educational curriculum. The

units encourage students to think about the beginnings of American democracy, as well

as the many challenges it faced throughout our country's history.[12] NARA claims that

> Teaching with primary documents encourages a varied learning
> environment for teachers and students alike. Lectures, demonstrations,
> analysis of documents, independent research, and group work become a
> gateway for research with historical records in ways that sharpen students'
> skills and enthusiasm for history, social studies, and the humanities.

The lesson plans are divided roughly by era and include themes such as, "Revolution and

the New Nation (1754-1820s)," "The Emergence of Modern America (1890-1930)," and

"Postwar United States (1945 to early 1970s)."

The "Revolution and the New Nation (1754-1820s)" lesson plan, for example,

encourages students to think critically about their own nation's history, and at once gets

them to appreciate where we have come from, and also to imagine where we might go in

the future. It also allows students to recognize historical bias and the multitude of

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[11] National Archives and Records Administration, "The National Archives Experience,"
http://www.archives.gov/nae/visit/reserved-visits.html (accessed June 5, 2008).
[12] National Archives and Records Administration, "Teaching with Documents: Lesson Plans,"
http://www.archives.gov/education/lessons/ (accessed June 5, 2008).

perspectives documented in primary sources. The curriculum unit includes a description

of the historical context of the era, and then supplies links to digital copies of archival

resources. They include, among other things, engravings of Washington and Lafayette at

Valley Forge or the capture of Fort Ticonderoga, a copy of Benedict Arnold's Oath of

Allegiance, and the signature page from the Treaty of Paris. NARA then provides a list of

activities that are based on students' analyses of those documents. The following are a

few examples:

- Ask these questions: Are these documents primary or secondary sources? How do you know? How reliable is each document for historical accuracy?
- Distribute paper and colored pencils to students. Assign students to illustrate an event from the Revolutionary War or to illustrate what may have happened some time before or after one of the selected documents. Encourage students to create their illustrations from the perspective of a French or British artist.
- Assign students to research and write a monologue from the perspective of one of the individuals who played a significant role during the Revolutionary period. In their speeches, they should describe significant events of the period including the Stamp Act, the Declaration of Independence, Valley Forge, and the Articles of Confederation.[13]

Similarly, the "Postwar United States (1945 to early-1970s)" lesson plan gets

students to think about democratic societies and their rights and responsibilities as

citizens.[14] The lesson plan includes a digital copy of a telegram from Senator Joseph

McCarthy to President Harry S. Truman regarding a possible Communist infiltration in

the United States State Department. Students are asked to discuss things that may have

motivated McCarthy to write this document, as well as write a hypothetical response

from the perspective of President Truman. They are also encouraged to talk about other

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[13] National Archives and Records Administration, "Teaching with Documents: Images of the American Revolution," http://www.archives.gov/education/lessons/revolution-images/ (accessed October 21, 2008).
[14] National Archives and Records Administration, "Teaching with Documents: Telegram from Senator Joseph McCarthy to President Harry S. Truman," http://www.archives.gov/education/lessons/mccarthy-telegram/ (accessed October 21, 2008).

examples of racial, ethnic, or political persecution throughout American history, and analyze the differences and similarities between those cases and the post-WWII anti-communist hysteria that was fueled, in large part, by Senator McCarthy. This represents just one example from among a broad list of activities related to the "Postwar United States" lesson plan.

Although the curriculum units are typically designed to supplement history and social studies curriculum, and are generally tailored to meet educational requirements in that specific content area, opportunities for interdisciplinary and cross-curricular approaches to learning are also encouraged. For example, NARA suggests that teachers share the "Revolution and the New Nation" documents with their colleagues in government and art classes, and the "Postwar United States" materials with science and language arts teachers. NARA's lesson plans are exemplary in that, in addition to strengthening educational curriculum as a whole, the lesson plans also get students to recognize and think critically about their role as citizens in a democratic society. Lee Ann Potter, Director of Education and Volunteer programs at NARA, keeps a file cabinet full of anecdotal evidence of these programs' success, noting that they receive enthusiastic fan mail providing outstanding feedback about NARA's educational programs.[15]

The Library of Congress (LOC) supports a number of similar programs that seek to improve the teaching of history and also create an archives-literate society through the use of archival records. Most of the programs focus in large part on individuals' and communities' contributions to our democratic society. The LOC's programs are therefore exemplary in that they appear to address both side of the archival literacy package. That is, on the one hand, the programs function as a means to introduce younger people to the

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[15] Lee Ann Potter, interview with the author (May 29, 2008).

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existence of archives, and also educate them about how to use archival materials in their every day lives and education. On the other hand, because such a large portion of the library's holdings are made up of documents which have helped to support and sustain our democratic society, the education programs also contribute to the larger goal of developing overall archival literacy in individuals at very early ages. The programs truly demonstrate that there is both historical and social value retained in archival materials.

The LOC maintains a listing of suggested resources for educators interested in teaching with primary sources. LOC's American Memory program provides a free online archive of over one hundred digital primary source collections that are available to the public. A separate page designed especially for teachers provides suggestions for using American Memory resources in education. The page includes a description of the nature of primary sources, justifications for why they should be used in classroom settings, and links to other educational resources.[16] These tools allow teachers to construct their own primary source-based curriculum built upon digital reproductions of documents supplied by the library. This option is for teachers who have the interest, time, and know-how to identify relevant documents and create their own lesson plans based on the needs of their classes.

On the other hand, the LOC also provides access to literally hundreds of complete lesson plans that are based on the American Memory digital collections. The lesson plans cover various topic areas such as "Civics and Government," "Literature/Poetry," "Colonization and Settlement," and "The New Nation." Within those broad themes are dozens of possible activities individually designed for different age groups in grades K through 12. Each lesson plan comes with a basic overview, instructions for use, and an

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[16] Library of Congress, "The Learning Page," http://memory.loc.gov/learn/ (accessed June 1, 2008).

evaluation tool. They also provide digital copies of all the primary sources needed to conduct the activity. For example, under the heading "Civics and Government," there is a lesson plan called "Voices for Votes: Suffrage Strategies," which is tailored for students in grades four through six. The goal of this curriculum unit is to get students to

- Examine a variety of primary source documents to learn about the history of suffrage for women;
- Learn that there are many ways to influence and effect change;
- Understand that it took the efforts of many people over time for women to gain the right to vote; and
- Use their knowledge from studying the suffrage movement to create modern day election ephemera.

Resources include digital copies of suffrage pictures, broadsides and other printed ephemera, and a selection of documents from the National American Suffrage Association collection at the Library of Congress. [17]

Another example under the "Civics and Government" heading is the "All History is Local" lesson for eleventh and twelfth grade students. This activity is designed to get older students to do their own archival work. They are asked to gather primary sources from their own family members and friends, which will then be digitized and made available online for other schools to utilize. The students are even encouraged to design lesson plans built upon the archival resources they have collected, from which other classes can model their own programs. The theory is that, in doing so, students will

- Learn key facts/concepts of American history.
- Understand historiography as a process parallel to the scientific method.
- Understand and articulate the interplay between national, state, local, and personal history.
- Become producers of knowledge for teachers and students to use in local schools.

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[17] Library of Congress, "The Learning Page - Voices for Votes: Suffrage Strategies," http://memory.loc.gov/learn/lessons/00/suffrage/overview.html (accessed October 21, 2008).

The lesson plan gives extensive directions for selecting archival materials, analyzing them for content, creating a lesson plan, and then evaluating the activity upon its completion.[18]

The Library of Congress recently developed the Teaching with Primary Sources (TPS) program, partially in response to the success of their American Memory program. By using primarily Library of Congress materials in the lessons, the TPS program claims to "engage students in learning about Congress, representative democracy, and citizen participation."[19] TPS involves a consortium of colleges, universities and other educational organizations that collaborated to help teachers across the country learn best practices for using primary sources in the classroom.[20] According to a statement given by the coordinator of the program, Vivian Awumey,

> The Library is working with a consortium of universities and other educational organizations to create professional development opportunities for teachers. The focus of these activities is to enhance the ability of teachers to embed primary sources into high-quality, inquiry-based instruction.[21]

The program is specifically designed to help classes utilize the millions of primary sources made available through the Library of Congress' online catalog. Indiana University now hosts the official Teaching with Primary Sources website, which provides resources for both teachers and students.

TPS activities are centered on themes such as "Public Criticisms of Congress: A Look at American Political Cartoons," and "The Importance of Citizen Participation:

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[18] Library of Congress, "The Learning Page – All History is Local: Students as Archivists," http://memory.loc.gov/learn/lessons/98/local/intro.html (accessed October 21, 2008).
[19] The Center on Congress at Indiana University, "Teaching with Primary Sources," http://www.tpscongress.org/teachers/index.php (accessed October 21, 2008).
[20] Library of Congress, "Teaching with Primary Sources Program: About the Program," http://www.loc.gov/teachers/tps/about/ (accessed October 21, 2008).
[21] Library of Congress, "Helping America's Teachers," http://www.loc.gov/loc/lcib/0610/edoutreach.html (accessed June 1, 2008).

American Social Movements."[22] An introduction, lesson plans, and digitized archival resources such as cartoons and broadsides of constitutional deliberations are made available through the website. Educating students about democracy and being responsible citizens is made possible through the analysis of these primary source documents, while at the same time they make the study of history more interesting and relevant. A seventh grader from Arlington, Virginia states that "[w]orking with documents… makes thinking about history a lot more vital. Connections between history and real life happen more by viewing documents…"[23]

Impressive educational outreach efforts are also demonstrated at the state level. Viki Sand illustrates how the Minnesota Historical Society (MHS) pioneered multimedia history resource units for statewide classrooms which some consider are "the most ambitious of the curriculum projects and by far the most successful."[24] Take, for example, the first unit of the series: The Ojibwe History Resource Unit, the product of close collaboration between the MHS, the Ojibwe Curriculum Committee and the American Indian Studies Department of the University of Minnesota. Sand notes that "the materials were not designed to reestablish the concept of the 'noble savage.' Rather they would reflect a return to the primary sources asking questions based upon competing historical perspective."[25] In this way, the students were in fact

> doing history: examining primary sources, evaluating perspectives, arriving at conclusions, and looking to their own families and

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[22] Library of Congress, "Teaching with Primary Sources," http://www.tpscongress.org/ (accessed June 1, 2008).

[23] Library of Congress, "Teaching with Primary Sources: About the Program," http://www.loc.gov/teachers/tps/about/ (accessed October 9, 2008).

[24] Katherine Corbett, "From File Folder to the Classroom: Recent Primary Source Curriculum Projects," *American Archivist* 54 (Spring 1994): 299.

[25] Viki Sand, "History Resource Units from the Minnesota Historical Society," *American Archivist* 41, 2 (April 1978): 166.

communities to see how they either reflected or deviated from the norm of the state's experience.[26]

Sand admits that the units are often time-consuming and expensive to produce, but well worth it considering the quality of the materials used, and the enthusiastic reception they receive from both students and teachers. Furthermore, this author would argue that the programs encourage precisely the kind of analytical thinking that will continue to serve students throughout their educational and professional careers, and ultimately increase the archival literacy of modern society.

The Washington State Historical Society and Museum (WSHS) offers lesson plans which utilize primary source documents to stimulate an enthusiasm for scholarship in students, as well as promote creative and analytical thinking within the classroom. The WSHS promotes their collections as valuable sources of history that allow students to develop their own conclusions about past events. It would do a disservice to the WSHS, however, to suggest that the lesson plans only support history curriculum. In fact, as will be discussed further in Chapter Three, many of these activities actually meet state and federally mandated education requirements in a variety of subjects beyond just history and social studies. The institution should, however, improve their explanation of the ability for original documents to do more than just serve scholarly purposes.

The WSHS lesson plans are designed to take anywhere from a few hours up to several weeks, depending on time available and the needs of the teacher and the class. They come with step-by-step instructions so that teachers are clear on how to use them. The learning activities are designed around the strengths of available primary resources, that is, those most significantly represented in the society's collections and those of its

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[26] *Ibid*: p. 165.

partner institutions. Naturally, therefore, lessons are tailored to state history, which is often times more relevant and interesting to younger ages because, as Julia Hendry notes, "items of local interest… have the potential to capture students' interests in a way that stories of far-away events do not."[27] Although these state-sponsored programs do not specifically address issues of democracy and responsible citizenship the way that the NARA and LOC programs do, they are nevertheless another means of introducing students to archives in a meaningful way.

The WSHS lesson plans are grouped into four broad categories based on theme, including U.S.-Indian Treaties and Westward Migration, 20th Century Civil Rights, Environmental History, and Native American Cultures & Early Washington Explorers. The lesson plans are then sub-divided into a number of units designed to promote the development of certain skills for various age-groups. For example, the category focusing on treaties and westward migration is broken into smaller units such as "Clothing that Talks," which was designed specifically for third to fifth graders. The goal of this lesson plan is to get students to analyze historical dress to form conclusions about identity, status, and ethnicity, as well as identify evidence of encounters between Europeans and Native Americans throughout history.[28] The lesson includes digital reproductions of photographs, illustrations, and even some artifacts worn by 19th century Euro-Americans and Native Americans. Supplemental questions for the students include, for example, "how does material culture reflect a culture and its interactions with other cultures?" and "how can historic photos, artifacts and documents help us to understand the past?"

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[27] Julia Hendry, "Primary Sources in K-12 Education: Opportunities for Archives," *American Archivist* 70 (Spring/Summer 2007): 127.
[28] Washington State Historical Society, "The Treaty Trail: U.S. – Indian Treaty Councils in the Northwest," http://washingtonhistoryonline.org/treatytrail/teaching/clothing-that-talks.htm (accessed March 12, 2008).

Moreover, a unit titled "Point of View" uses archival materials to show high school students the multiple unique perspectives present at the 1885 Walla Walla Treaty Council. This allows them to better understand how differing points of view shape the course of history as well as the historical record. Furthermore, students are encouraged to think analytically about the idea of historical inevitability, as well as "the ideals of a democratic society as evidenced in the treaty process."[29] "Clothing that Talks" and "Point of View" represent just a few examples from a much larger offering available through the WSHS. The vision and hard work that went into the design of these lesson plans is both exemplary and inspirational and, given the positive response to the programs, it is also certainly justified. For example, in thanking the WSHS for collating and making these resources available, a Seattle public school teacher also praised them for making "subjects that before might have seemed unapproachable much more fun and accessible" for students.[30]

Another program administered at a state level is the "Bringing History Home" project, which is an initiative at the University of Iowa and Washington (Iowa) Community School District. The project promotes an exploration of and synthesized understanding about a variety of sources including, but not limited to, original records. It focuses on the potential benefits to the education community specifically, which is partly understandable considering that the program was developed within the education field. This means, however, that opportunities to impart knowledge about the overall archival package are missed. That is, nowhere are the broader social uses for records demonstrated or even discussed. This certainly doesn't negate the promise that Bringing

[29] *Ibid.*

[30] Washington State Historical Society, "How I Used the… Teacher Tips and Testimonials," http://stories.washingtonhistory.org/education/teachers/teachertips.shtml (accessed October 9, 2008).

History Home has for getting students to use archives at early ages. However, the program ultimately misses the main goal outlined in this thesis, which is to produce an archives and information literate adult society that understands the multiple functions that records perform.

The Brining History Home project utilizes resources from the National Archives and Records Administration, the Library of Congress, the Yale Avalon Project, Gilder Lehrman, Digital History, and numerous other online databases of historical materials. Elise Fillpot, initiator and current director of the project, explains that

> The sources are woven into lessons and units that incorporate five processes for studying history: reading for background understanding, analyzing sources, constructing timelines, analyzing maps as primary sources, and constructing maps as graphic organizers, and synthesizing varied sources into narrative understanding.[31]

Fillpot notes that feedback from the education community has been very positive, so much so, in fact, that school districts in other states are seeking to adopt similar programs. Furthermore, she states that "[a]n extensive external evaluation of student learning outcomes associated with [the] program has documented the project's positive impact on children's ability to learn history using varied sources."[32]

Like many of the other programs, Bringing History Home provides a general outline and suggestions for activities, combined with supplementary primary source materials. For example, a unit for kindergarteners titled "History of Me," involves having students bring in personal items like photographs, letters, and clothing. The teacher does as well, to establish a picture of how things have changed over time. The lesson requires sharing and class discussion, during which students compare life from "long ago" to their

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[31] Elise Fillpot, interview with the author (May 20, 2008).
[32] *Ibid.*

lives today. At the end of the activity, students place their items in a box, representing

their own personal archive representative of their individual history.[33] This is certainly a

promising start for future budding archivists! The unit is also age appropriate, as the

National Council for Social Studies recommends that kindergarteners learn about "their

own immediate environment," as well as "environments far distant in time and space."[34]

The Montana Heritage Project, created by a group of classroom teachers with the

support of the Library of Congress, is another example of primary source curriculum

projects sponsored at the state level. The program does not focus on composing

classroom-based activities, but rather promotes student writing based on primary source

research done outside of the classroom. The project's official website explains that

> thinking as detectives, journalists, folklorists, scientists, and historians, students search for clues in brittle old newspapers, fading photographs, and changed landscapes. They locate information in government and business archives. They examine historic buildings, community celebrations, and old letters for insight into what changes, what stays the same, and why.[35]

Students engage in activities that promote historical reasoning and critical thinking, and

they "culminate in tangible scholarly products that are preserved in… archives as well as

in local school and museum collections. Most projects [also] feature a public event to

invite the community to share what has been learned."[36] Students are therefore rewarded

for their scholarly efforts by seeing the products of their hard work published and/or

displayed in public forums.

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[33] Bringing History Home, "History of Me," http://www.bringinghistoryhome.org/gradek.htm (accessed October 22, 2008).
[34] National Council for Social Studies, quoted in "Bringing History Home,"
http://www.bringinghistoryhome.org/downloads/Kindergarten/CompleteHistory0fMe.pdf (accessed October 22, 2008).
[35] Montana Heritage Project, http://www.montanaheritageproject.org/ (accessed June 1, 2008).
[36] *Ibid.*

The preceding discussion shows that many different kinds of archival and educational institutions are pioneering educational programs based on primary sources. There is anecdotal evidence that demonstrates the success of these programs in getting students to use archives in their early education. For example, Lee Ann Potter at NARA keeps an entire file cabinet full of examples of successful programs. Likewise, Danna Bell-Russel of the Library of Congress shares a recent experience that exemplified the positive outcome of archival outreach through education. She explains that while on a trip to California with the Julliard Quartet to visit the Idylwild Arts Academy,

> One student was completely overwhelmed and excited by [an original page of Brahms sheet music]; it was the same piece he was practicing for a performance! In studying the primary source, he noticed that the transcription he was using was completely different. At every class break, he returned to look at the music. He brought his friends back. And then he brought his violin to try and play the piece as originally transcribed…[37]

Bell-Russel's example is dually compelling because it clearly shows the lasting impact created by using archives in education, while also demonstrating how records are useful in subjects besides history and social studies.

It is important to underscore again that, while all the units described above do promote archives as historical resources, some fail to emphasize that they are also resources that support democracy and an open government. This is most likely a result of the professional background of the individuals associated with the different programs, as well as the nature of available materials. The Bringing History Home programs were designed by educators without the assistance of someone with archival education, and as a result, they do not actively make the connection to archives as possessing both historical and social value. On the other hand, educational outreach programs at the

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[37] "Lasting Impact: 'Pitch Perfect' Primary Sources," in *American Archives Month: Celebrating the American Record* (Chicago: Society of American Archivists, October 2007): 2.

Library of Congress were created in a setting where the social value of archives is also emphasized. This suggests that, for them to be truly successful, these programs must be the products of close collaboration and a shared vision between educators and archivists. This criterion will be discussed in greater detail in the following chapter.

Although there was nothing forcing the forward-thinking individuals illustrated above to design primary source curriculum projects, they appear to have accepted the kind of professional mandate that was outlined in the introduction of this thesis. The archivists involved in developing some of these programs truly embraced their role as activist by working to educate society, at all levels, about the multiple uses for archival materials. That sense of urgency must be passed on to others within the archival and education fields. The following, final portion of this thesis outlines a six-part framework for designing successful education programs. The main criteria outlined in the final chapter include, briefly, a focus on the strengths of one's holdings when designing programs; cooperation across the parallel fields of archives, museums, libraries, and schools; simple and affordable dissemination of information and resources; an emphasis on analytical thinking and student-oriented learning; and a critical self evaluation process to determine the strengths and weaknesses of any new program. These criteria are based on this author's analysis of the programs described above, as well as on the advice of those who were involved in creating and implementing successful programs.

CHAPTER THREE:

A FRAMEWORK FOR NEW PROGRAMS

As the previous discussion shows, there are a number of existing educational

programs that are based on primary sources. With that said, however, there is still plenty

of room for advancement in this area. The prospect of designing programs with the same

breadth and impact of many of those listed above may indeed be daunting for smaller

institutions or those with less funding than, say, NARA or a state historical society. There

is, however, a framework that can serve as a practical guide to begin the process. It was

constructed by the author of this thesis, and is based on an analysis of the programs

described in the previous chapter. The framework is built upon the following six criteria:

1) programs must focus and be based on the strengths and character of the archival institution and its collections;
2) cooperation between archival professionals and education specialists must be actively pursued to ensure that the final product is historically sound, appealing to and easily understood by teachers, and still demonstrative of the historical and social value of archives;
3) product(s) need to be affordable, easily disseminated, come with clear instructions for implementing them in classrooms, and concrete examples of how using the resources can help both students and teachers satisfy educational standards;
4) opportunities for professional collaboration between and across institutions must be pursued so that all available resources are utilized;
5) the final programs should focus on student-oriented learning first with teacher support as a secondary mechanism; and
6) a critical evaluation process is needed to assess the program's strengths, weaknesses, successes and failures.

The six criteria represent the most fundamental steps one must take to create a successful

program. The remainder of this chapter explores these six components in greater detail.

Program Focus

One must start by considering an overall strategy to guide the design process.

Two basic approaches involve either focusing on the existing strengths and scope of

one's collections, or identifying broader educational themes and then following up by selecting relevant resources. There are arguments for both approaches. For example, the Bringing History Home program uses what Elise Fillpot calls a "backward design process," in which lessons are designed by first identifying the learning goals or questions to be explored, and then selecting resources and activities that will help achieve those goals or find possible answers to the questions.[1] In other words, they begin by selecting a broad theme, based in part on educational standards and requirements for learning, and then they identify relevant materials to help teach that theme. Their approach is sort of a top-down method.

Ann Pederson warns, however, that "it is essential to select from [the] banquet with care, choosing projects which complement and strengthen the archives effort overall, rather than those which, though exciting, actually divert staff energies and resources for little lasting benefit."[2] Likewise, Viki Sand of the Minnesota Historical Society argues that "programs must be a reflection of the essential strength and character of the agency [and]… education programs need to be built upon rather than built separately from the integrity of an organization." Furthermore, she argues that "to be successful within an institution the programs must be a reflection of the essential strength and character of the agency."[3] These individuals advocate a bottom-up philosophy in which they focus first on the strengths and characteristics of available documents, and then build themes around the materials themselves rather than some pre-existing educational rubric. The Ojibwe History Resource Unit, for example, was not created in

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[1] Elise Fillpot, interview with the author (May 20, 2008).
[2] Ann Pederson, *Keeping Archives* (Sydney: Australian Society of Archivists, Inc. 1987): 312.
[3] Viki Sand, "History Resource Units from the Minnesota Historical Society," *American Archivist* 41, 2 (April 1978): p. 163.

response to a perceived need for educational programs specifically in that subject area. It was, rather, because the Minnesota Historical Society's collections were particularly strong in this area.

Focusing on the strengths of one's collections and designing programs based on the resources at hand seems a more viable option for the majority of institutions. There are three main arguments supporting this claim. First of all, and perhaps most importantly, archivists and historians are well aware of the tendency for historical trends to fluctuate over time. Themes and topics that were popular in the past very often evolve into new interests, just as educational standards are revised to meet new demands within the country's school systems. Focusing educational programs on the documents themselves prevents individuals from having to re-design their programs with every passing historical fancy or amendment of standards. The characteristics of the documents will always remain the same, even as the interpretive frameworks and related questions may change. It is up to the researcher to interpret those characteristics as they see fit in relation to their individual needs and interests.

The second reason for using the documents themselves to anchor these programs is that such an approach allows for a sharing of resources across institutions and geographic locations without forcing others to conform to highly-detailed and specialized programs that may not be relevant to them. Rather, institutions should make primary source materials available to supplement others' programs while still leaving them the freedom to tailor their programs according to needs and interests in their area. Focusing primarily on the documents themselves allows for this kind of resource sharing. Finally, the design strategy must focus on the documents themselves because the ultimate goal

from the archivist's perspective is to get students to better understand the nature of archival materials. The value of primary sources as educational building blocks, and the importance of records as sources of information, should remain at the forefront of participants' attention. Focusing on the documents from the outset will keep this goal in plain sight.

Partnering with the Education Field

Once primary resources and possible themes are selected based on the strengths of an organization's collections, the next step is selling the idea to teachers and educational administrators. Katharine Corbett points out that "[s]uccessful primary source curriculum projects are products of close collaboration between archivists, historians, and educators."[4] This process would certainly be expedited if educators themselves were knowledgeable about the nature and potential uses of archival materials (yet another argument for early archival education). Additional outreach is needed to show teachers how archives can engage them and their students as spectators and interpreters of the action of the past.[5] For example, in promoting the Bringing History Home program, Elise Fillpot found that "when teachers… [were] introduced to using such sources to study history, they move[d] along a continuum to adopt a more authentic paradigm of the interpretive, evidence-based nature of history."[6]

Elsie Finch, formerly of the National Archives and Records Administration, elaborates on how she approaches teachers regarding the use of documents in their classrooms:

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[4] Katharine Corbett, "From File Folder to the Classroom: Recent Primary Source Curriculum Projects," *American Archivist* 54 (Spring 1994): 299.
[5] Kirk Ankeney, Merrell Frankel, and Rebecca Whisner, "A Story Well Told: Primary Sources and History Education," *Social Studies Review* 43, 2 (Spring 2004): 12.
[6] Fillpot, interview.

Because the teachers were unclear about how to use documents, the packages would give specific instructions in methodology and provide worksheets usable with any documents. Archival staff would also organize and publicize workshops, in-service training, and professional association panels, emphasizing strategies for using documents in the classroom.[7]

Furthermore, the Bringing History Home project encourages knowledgeable teachers to explain the benefits of teaching with primary sources to other teachers. Elise Fillpot explains that, initially, they "…seek only faculty that are actively grappling with how to teach history effectively." Then, to continue promoting the education program, the teachers and program directors "…conduct recruitment meeting with entire school staffs [which are]… led by teacher mentors that previously participated in the workshops… and subsequently became leaders."[8] It makes sense to start small by involving just a few interested teachers, and then, based upon the success of the programs, rely on those same teachers to pass the word around to their colleagues.

Furthermore, it is necessary for archivists to be involved at the front end, so that programs clearly demonstrate the broader value of archives, beyond their scholarly, historical use. That is, in addition to simply highlighting records' attractiveness in making history and social studies education more interesting, archivists can also provide examples and evidence of how archives play a significant role in promoting sound democracies and the service of justice throughout history. Without the presence of an archives professional in the design process, students and teachers often overlook the social importance of records. This was the case with the Bringing History Home project in that it focused solely on archives' value as historical documents, and failed to demonstrate that broader social issues can also be explored through the analysis of

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[7] Elsie Finch, "Making Sure They Want It: Managing Successful Public Programs," *American Archivist* 56 (Winter 1993): 73-74.
[8] Fillpot, interview.

archival materials. Although any introduction to archival materials should be considered a positive one, we do not want to miss out on any opportunity to emphasize broader, social implications that records offer to society.

Cooperation between archivists and educators may be easier said than done, however. Partnerships may often be difficult and unwieldy because individuals in both professions have plenty of routine responsibilities to occupy their time, and they may in fact consider primary source curriculum projects to be a waste of time. This notion must be dispelled! When Elsie Finch worked at NARA she arranged workshops, in-service training, and professional association panels to provide avenues for this kind of collaboration.[9] Likewise, Stephanie Lile explains that the Washington State Historical Society offers free teacher orientation workshops twice a year, and occasional summer institutes for teachers. Although the WSHS may charge a minimal fee for these programs, they try to garner sponsors in order to keep costs low.[10] Opportunities for additional training and continuing education can meet educators' requirements for professional advancement, outside of the daily demands of their classrooms.

In addition to a simple lack of time, teachers and education specialists may be wary of making any significant changes to the status quo, and students may have difficulty adjusting to new techniques. However, David Kobrin points out the importance of change for any learning environment.

> Change is a learning process for all those involved – unless the 'change' is merely a passive acceptance of another's demands. To teach well requires attention to the ideas and practices of other professionals. … Change must

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[9] Finch, "Making Sure They Want It": 73.
[10] Stephanie Lile, interview with the author (March 25, 2008).

be personalized. … Nor should [there be] any pressure… to accept new ideas in their entirety.[11]

His statement about avoiding a "passive acceptance of another's demands" underlines the need for dynamic and constructive cooperation between archival and educational professionals to improve the teaching of history and demonstrate the greater value of archives. The relationship between archivists and educators should be mutually beneficial, and neither side should act like or be seen as the ultimate authority on any issue. Because encouraging the use of archival materials by targeting younger audiences is the responsibility of the archives profession as a whole, and because primary source documents are so obviously needed in the classroom, both archivists and educators should feel compelled to share the load with one another.

Affordability and Accessibility

Another essential criterion is that new programs be affordable and easily disseminated. This can often require a significant financial investment on the part of the archival repository or historical society at the outset of the program. However, considering the potential to increase the use and exposure of archival materials by fostering an internalized appreciation for primary sources among the public at a young age, this investment should be justified. Stephanie Lile, for example, points out that the Washington State Historical Society considers their education programs a public service, and they don't recover many of the costs.[12] There may, in fact, be greater negative financial repercussions for institutions who avoid developing outreach programs based on the premise that they are too costly. Her experience administering the Ojibwe History

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[11] David Kobrin, *Beyond the Textbook: Teaching History Using Documents and Primary Sources* (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann 1996): 9-10.
[12] Lile, interview.

Resource Units led Viki Sand to argue that "[p]ractically, increased public funding and public demand will isolate and exclude those agencies that choose to ignore their opportunities and responsibilities."[13] As such, archival repositories must take advantage of the existing strengths of their staff in order to maximize cost-effectiveness.

There are also a number of options for receiving outside funding. Grant money is available to help support the creation of programs like those listed in Chapter Two. For example, the National Endowment for the Humanities offers the Teaching American History grant which fully funds the Bringing History Home program. Likewise, although it is probably not surprising that the Foundation for the National Archives provides most of the funding to NARA's educational programs, the foundation also gives out scholarships to teachers who attend NARA's summer institutes. Additionally, the foundation also helps schools buy curriculum materials.[14] Obviously there is never enough money to go around and the financial issue will almost always make or break a successful program, but there are alternate means of funding available to those with the creativity and tenacity to pursue them.

Another component of the third criterion requires that primary source curriculum projects not significantly increase the workload of teachers, nor should they confuse them. Elsie Finch found that teachers "all used textbooks but few like them… [but] very few had ever used documents, not because they did not understand their value but because getting them was too time-consuming and strategies for using them too elusive."[15] Likewise, Julia Hendry found that many teachers actively seek to incorporate

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[13] Viki Sand, "History Resource Units from the Minnesota Historical Society," *American Archivist* 41, 2 (April 1978): 164.
[14] Lee Ann Potter, interview with the author (May 29, 2008).
[15] Finch, "Making Sure They Want It": 73.

primary source documents into curriculum "to ignite the imaginations of their students and to encourage critical thinking." However, they generally do not ask very sophisticated questions about what types of materials to use, almost always seeking to pull those documents from published sources rather than seeking out individual documents on their own.[16] Again, this underlines the need for collaboration between archivists and educators in the development of these programs.

One way to make primary resource kits more attractive to teachers is by ensuring that they meet state and national education standards and requirements. Julia Hendry explains that "teachers place great importance on the ability to integrate primary materials into the state curriculum."[17] Taking those standards into account when designing curriculum programs will make them significantly more appealing to teachers. For example, education projects at NARA were developed to meet both national history standards and national standards for civics and government. NARA's education webpage has links to those standards so that teachers are able to quickly and efficiently see which projects meet those requirements and how.

Similarly, Tim Hoogland of the Minnesota Historical Society (MHS) explains that his institution was involved in the development of Minnesota State Content and Skills standards for History and Social Studies, and so they start with those as a foundation for their educational programming. They also incorporate national standards for education to further guide the development of their programs.[18] Elise Fillpot suggests hiring an outside source such as a teacher or administrator who is uninvolved with any of the other

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[16] Julia Hendry, "Primary Sources in K-12 Education: Opportunities for Archives," *American Archivist* 70 (Spring/Summer 2007): 124.
[17] *Ibid:* 125.
[18] Tim Hoogland, interview with the author (July 7, 2008).

elements of the program. They may objectively evaluate the project to ensure its

alignment with state and national standards.[19]

  In Washington State, the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI)

created "Essential Academic Learning Requirements," commonly referred to as EALRs,

which "provide an overview of what students should know and be able to do in grades K-

10."[20] The EALRs were initially developed in 1993 as part of the state's Basic Education

Act, and they lay out learning standards in eight content areas: Reading, Mathematics,

Science, Writing, Communication, Social Studies, the Arts, and Health and Fitness.[21]

Furthermore, Washington State curriculum specialists have designed "Classroom Based

Assessments," also known as CBAs, which are required curriculum components intended

to demonstrate that students are developing key skills in three specific content areas:

Social Studies, the Arts, and Health and Fitness.[22] CBAs are administered in the

classroom by teachers who, based on various activities, questions, and discussion, fill out

an extensive rubric that determine whether students have learned key skills or not.

  Primary resource kits offered by the Washington State Historical Society were

developed to help students meet the EALRs appropriate to their grade level, and many of

the resource kits qualify as approved CBAs. The society's website explains that "[t]he

primary inspiration for this online resource for educators is the Washington State

Historical Society's mission to make Washington's heritage resources accessible to the

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[19] Fillpot, interview.
[20] Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, "Teaching and Learning: Overview,"
http://www.k12.wa.us/CurriculumInstruct/default.aspx (accessed March 12, 2008).
[21] Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, "Teaching and Learning: Essential Academic Learning
Requirements and Grade Level Expectations," http://www.k12.wa.us/CurriculumInstruct/EALR_GLE.aspx
(accessed March 12, 2008).
[22] Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, "Teaching and Learning: Classroom-Based Assessments
(CBAs) and Classroom-Based Performance Assessments (CBPAs),"
http://www.k12.wa.us/assessment/CBAOverview.aspx (accessed March 12, 2008).

public, especially to students and teachers."[23] Furthermore, the Washington OSPI website explains that "classroom-based assessments have the unique power to engage students in meaningful work that is authentic to engaged, informed citizenship."[24] This is clearly in line with archivists' mission to be activists in promoting archives' role in encouraging responsible democratic participation. Primary source materials can help classes meet state and national standards while also enlightening students about sources of information that can protect them as citizens.

Stephanie Lile at the Washington State Historical Society warns, however, of focusing too steadfastly on state standards in the design and implementation of curriculum programs:

> [T]hese standards, especially state [standards], are moving targets. We remain focused on what we are trying to teach – what this… repository has to offer – and develop materials and programs based on that. The standards inform what we do, but they do not dictate it. We try to be a major influence on how history is taught in the schools instead of the other way around.[25]

Lile makes a profound point here: the involvement of historical institutions in integrating primary sources into the classrooms may in fact inform future educational standards. If archivists are frustrated that history is taught almost exclusively via the textbook, then educational outreach through curriculum development represents an unparalleled opportunity for the archival profession to influence and improve the teaching of history to the youth of today.

Professional Collaboration

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[23] Washington State History Museum, "Lesson Plans," http://washingtonhistoryonline.org/education/teachers/overview.htm (accessed March 12, 2008).
[24] Office of Superintendent of Public Instructions, "State Social Studies Classroom-Based Assessment: You Decide," http://www.k12.wa.us/assessment/WASL/SocialStudies/CBAs/Elementary-YouDecideDocumentsCBA.pdf (accessed March 12, 2008).
[25] Lile, interview.

Collaboration across institutions, although perhaps difficult to establish, can and will produce additional time- and money-saving benefits. Elsie Finch argues that because "…an archives has as much in common with other nonprofit educational and cultural organizations… it is likely that [the] institutional structure is very similar to that of others in the nonprofit sector that have received support in the past."[26] She suggests, therefore, that "[w]hat is needed is a sense of the larger profession of archivists, rather than the semi-imposed isolation to which we have adapted, combined with a keen appreciation of the fiscal advantages of shared time, staff, and talents."[27] If we accept the loftier role of archivist as activist then we must reach out to like-minded individuals within the archival field, as well from among parallel fields to encourage support for educational programs.

Finch proposes the "creation of networks of talent within a region [and]…just as we have devised research networks, so we can devise talent networks…"[28] Educators and administrators may be more willing to participate in the development of these programs if they feel they are part of a 'talent network.' In developing its programs, NARA, for example, partners with various institutions and agencies including the National Park Service, the Smithsonian, the Library of Congress, and others. Lee Ann Potter, Director for Education and Volunteer Programs at NARA, describes this network as "really a pretty small community of like-minded people who are involved in such education programs."[29] Almost all archivists can appreciate the small-community feel of our professional field. Furthermore, the networking opportunities provided through

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[26] Elsie Finch, *Advocating Archives* (Chicago: Society of American Archivists 1994): 25.
[27] Elsie Finch, "Education Programs: Outreach as an Administrative Function," *American Archivist* 41, 2 (April 1978): 151.
[28] *Ibid.*
[29] Potter, interview.

conferences, workshops, seminars, and social events further shrinks ours, as well as related fields.

The National Council for the Social Studies provides a great way to connect archivists with teachers. NCSS is the largest organization devoted to the study of social studies in the country, with over 26,000 members. NCSS has collaborated with NARA in the past to produce Teaching with Documents articles in both paper and web-based publications. Each article features a primary source document accompanied by teaching activities and lessons that focus on history, civics, and many other social studies disciplines.[30] NARA found this resource valuable for connecting teachers with primary documents and showing them how they can supplement curriculum while promoting a wider knowledge about archives. Likewise, the National Council for History Education mission is to "provide a communications network for all advocates of history education, whether in schools, colleges, museums, historical councils, or community groups."[31] Archival institutions, be they large or small, could work through NCSS and NCHE on either a national level, or more locally through the organizations' state affiliates.

Student-oriented Learning

Traditional classroom models must be adapted to encourage student-oriented, collaborative learning and analytical thinking. Educational theory has shown that, traditionally, students learn history as a set of disconnected facts with rigid right or wrong answers. Primary source documents, however, can reduce boredom and irrelevance

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[30] National Council for the Social Studies, "Teaching with Documents," http://www.ncss.org/twd?print-friendly=true (accessed June 3, 2008).
[31] National Council for History Education, http://www.nche.net/ (accessed June 3, 2008).

among students[32] by enabling students to mediate and synthesize their knowledge and "learn not to accept what is presented to them uncritically."[33] However, for primary source curriculum programs to be truly successful, the traditional teacher-centered classroom model must shift, focusing instead on student-oriented, collaborative learning based on primary documents. Teachers and secondary sources should be there primarily for support.

Primary source curriculum should encourage students to construct history for themselves rather than having it handed to them by historians through textbooks. Furthermore, the primary goal of the curriculum must be analytical skills rather than rote memorization and content regurgitation. Finch also notes that

> students [should] be able to identify the factual evidence in a document; identify points of view; collect, reorder, and weigh the significance of the evidence; and develop defensible inferences, conclusions, and generalizations from it. Although historical content of the packages [is] important, *analytical skills [are] primary.*[34]

Collaborative activities encourage analytical reasoning, and they also resonate more clearly with most students. Katharine Corbett points out that "[w]hen history becomes a participation sport, students develop skills they will continue to use long after they have forgotten textbook facts."[35]

In 2007, the *American Archivist* highlighted two emerging educational trends that strengthen the case for primary sources as curriculum enhancement tools. Julia Hendry

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[32] Ruth W. Sandwell, "Reading Beyond the Bias: Using Historical Documents in the Secondary Classroom," *McGill Journal of Education* 38, 1 (Winter 2003): 168.
[33] Finch, "Education Programs,": 138.
[34] Finch, "Making Sure they Want It": 73-74 (emphasis mine).
[35] Katharine Corbett, "From File Folder to the Classroom: Recent Primary Source Curriculum Projects," *American Archivist* 54 (Spring 1994): 300.

outlined the concepts of "inquiry-based learning" and "document-based questions" in an

article about archives in K-12 education. She explained that

> Across the disciplines, curricular and subject standards are beginning to
> emphasize the process of learning and evaluating information over
> mastering the content of a given subject area. … This is known as
> "inquiry-based learning," an approach to teaching that emphasizes the
> process of discovery on the part of the student, rather than the
> straightforward transmission of knowledge from teacher to student.[36]

Likewise, Gilliand-Swetland outlines that curriculum which integrates primary sources

should promote

> …a shifting in social control in the classrooms to where the students
> '[take] more responsibility for themselves and their actions in the
> classroom and…for their own learning [so that they may]…create,
> express, or otherwise represent knowledge and ideas in multiple ways
> to each other, and outside the classroom. [37]

Curriculum that uses primary sources must emphasize student-oriented learning from

which they can construct history for themselves rather than having it handed to them by

historians through textbooks. This will also strengthen their critical reasoning skills,

which will continue to serve them into adulthood by making them responsible, discerning

citizens.

Almost all of the programs described in Chapter Two focus on student-oriented

learning to some extent. History Day puts almost all of the responsibility for learning on

the side of the students. Of course, they do refer to their teachers and mentors for advice

and support, but ultimately the students' own conclusions, based in large part on the

study of primary sources, form the ultimate products that are presented in the

competition. The NARA, LOC and WSHS curriculum units also all encourage active-

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[36] Hendry: 117.
[37] Anne Gilliland-Swetland, "An Exploration of K-12 User Needs for Digital Primary Source Materials," *American Archivist* 61 (Spring 1998): 139.

learning techniques among students. They get them to think critically about their nation's

history and recognize the different perspectives evidenced in original documents. The

examples given in Chapter Two are all exemplary in their ability to change the focus of

learning in the classroom from a primarily teacher-directed format to one that is based on

the students' own insight and interpretation of archival materials.

Evaluation

The final criterion for designing curriculum projects is also probably the most

important, and that is the evaluation process. Evaluating the successes and/or failures of

any new project is essential to determine whether to continue the program at all, and, if

so, to update, improve, and fine-tune its design. Although it may be hard to believe, this

is probably the most complicated of the six criteria in the framework. How does an

institution measure success or lack thereof? There are really a variety of levels on which

to gauge success. This author believes that any activity which familiarizes children with

archival materials is a positive step towards developing an archives-literate society in the

future. Any program that takes away some of the mystery surrounding archives,

especially if it focuses on doing so early on in the lives of individuals, should considered

successful.

With that said, however, we also must not lose sight of the urgent need for an

archives-literate society, in which individuals understand how to find and use information

to support their rights, promote responsible social participation, and enforce sound

democratic principles. There isn't any realistic way to immediately assess the ability of

educational programs to contribute to such a society. However, the sooner that archivists

accept that we have professional mandate to establish a presence in lives of young

people, the sooner we may see that activism result in an enlightened society that inherently respects and understands archival programs. This also suggests a challenge for future research regarding the effectiveness of educational programs in getting individuals of all ages to understand and use archival resources.

The short-term success of programs is easier to gauge, and it is based primarily on whether or not the use of primary sources actually improves the overall quality of educational programming. To evaluate for this kind of success, some of the educational programs outlined above use a relatively standard evaluation check list, while others suggest an extensive evaluation be conducted by an outside party. There are even programs that evaluate their programs based purely on anecdotal evidence, although administrators admit to seeking more concrete ways to measure success. Both Potter and Fillpot suggest that longitudinal studies of individual classes are needed to assess the long-term effects of education programs.[38] What is most important is that the evaluation be able to determine if a project effectively educates young people through the use of primary sources, and in large part this relies on surveying students' attitudes regarding archives, both before and after participating in an activity.

The range of educational outreach options is vast and their success requires a great deal of vision, creativity, and some luck. There is no single prototype that will work for every type of archival institution. However, the framework outlined above is relevant to all kinds of organizations and can provide some direction for those interested in designing education programs. As examples from the programs detailed in Chapter Two demonstrate, this framework can be easily tailored or adapted to suit the needs of small, independent repositories, or large, multi-faceted institutions. With that said, there are

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[38] Potter and Fillpot, interviews.

certainly other things to consider when designing educational programs, and they will

undoubtedly vary according to the characteristics of any particular institution. Some of

these additional considerations will be addressed in the following conclusion, along with

suggestions for future research on this topic.

CONCLUSION:

THE FUTURE OF ARCHIVAL OUTREACH

To construct a sound argument for using primary sources in classrooms, there needs to be some discussion of possible pitfalls. Keith C. Barton, a university professor and education specialist, approaches the promise of primary sources in the classroom with more caution than the individuals cited in preceding chapters. Barton argues that primary sources almost always contain biases associated with the author and/or time period in which the records were created. He argues against the notion that archival documents are always objective, reliable sources of history. However, later in his article Barton admits that "historians seek out sources precisely because of their bias," and that "it is the unique bias of each source that helps us understand the range of viewpoints people held at the time."[1] Barton therefore implies, contrary to his earlier statements, that the analysis of primary documents in the classroom is an exercise in historical inquiry. Specialists like David Kobrin and Elsie Finch point out that this is precisely the beauty of primary sources. That is, they encourage analytical thinking and teach students to read between the lines and recognize bias within a historical context. This makes them critical thinkers, a quality that adults must have if they are to make informed, reasonable decisions in the face of life's challenges.

Barton also argues that the notion that primary sources are fun is generally a myth. He says that "such sources are not inherently interesting, and… can be used in ways that are neither exciting nor motivating – and certainly not fun."[2] However, his argument is based solely on curriculum designed by teachers who "simply assign sources

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[1] Keith C. Barton, "Primary Sources in History: Breaking Through the Myths," *Phi Delta Kappan* 86 (June 2005): 747.
[2] *Ibid*: 748.

to see if students can extract information… as such 'sourcework for sourcework's sake.'"[3] The successful programs cited above were designed by individuals and institutions with great creativity and enthusiasm for primary sources! Such archivists will choose to undertake such projects as a means of livening up curriculum rather than simply making students jump hoops. While Barton's postulation that primary sources can sometimes be boring is certainly irrefutable, it is simply incorrect to suggest that such is the case with all archival documents.

There is, however, a very real danger that education may be watered down by using solely primary sources to teach history. As any good historian is well aware, it takes all kinds of resources to construct a fair, balanced, accurate account of history. Furthermore, primary, secondary, and even tertiary sources do not provide a holistic account of history when used in isolation from each other. Modern archivists, however, generally possess a great deal of historical knowledge and they understand historical methods, which is why there is so much promise in partnering archivists with educators to develop these programs. Some who naysay the benefits that primary source curriculum projects can bring to education are educators who do not even consider collaborating with archivists and historians in designing curriculum. And so, archivists must be activists and emerge from the stacks and from behind their desks to cultivate relationships with teachers and educators. In a world where the two fields merge and co-exist in a symbiotic manner, the promise for quality history education and an archives-literate society is very, very real.

Archivists are a proud bunch, rightfully so as far as this author is concerned. We are, or at least should be, equally proud of our collections. We owe it to ourselves and the

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[3] *Ibid.*

archival profession to advocate for the use of those materials to improve the public's overall understanding of archives. In reality, this should not be so hard to do because, as Tim Ericson points out, "[t]he fact of the matter is that everyone is interested in archival records – in history, it is just that people do not realize it yet!"[4] Creating a place for archives in the lives of young individuals will provide them with the necessary knowledge to indulge their natural interest in history. Archivists who actively work on designing and implementing educational programs participate in outreach that will ultimately serve the entire field by nurturing respect and appreciation for archival materials. We need to thank those who have been trailblazers in the area of archival outreach through education, and we should market our field and our craft by following their example.

The subject of archival outreach through education certainly has areas needing further research. Gilliland-Swetland and Potter, for example, have postulated that primary sources are useful in a number of educational subjects in addition to social studies and history. It would behoove archivists and educators to investigate this more fully and perhaps demonstrate in greater detail the myriad uses for archives beyond just 'doing history.' Furthermore, as Potter and Fillpot noted in their interviews, long-term studies of the effects of educational outreach and the use of primary sources in the classroom need to be done, to cement in evidence the case for archival educational outreach that targets today's youth. These longitudinal studies need to track students' understanding of archival materials throughout their youth and into adulthood, to demonstrate that archives as educational resources actually do contribute to producing an archives-literate society.

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[4] Timothy L. Ericson, "Preoccupied with our own gardens: Outreach and Archivists," *Archivaria 31* (Winter 1990-91): 118.

Another possible area for future research involves looking at ways of tailoring educational outreach to target different socio-economic demographics. This could benefit the entire field and perhaps even encourage greater documentation of marginalized groups within archival holdings. Archivists know that all too often the records of marginalized or minority groups are not retained or given archival priority, or are never even created in the first place. The United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization's (UNESCO) Memory of the World program states that

> Documentary heritage reflects the diversity of languages, peoples, and cultures. It is the mirror of the world and its memory, but this memory is fragile. Every day, irreplaceable parts of this memory disappear forever.[5]

In large part it is the responsibility of the archives community to ensure a more representative sampling of records that demonstrate and promote social diversity. If we can tailor educational programs so that they touch the lives of minorities and other under-represented individuals and groups, then we may also help to fill in the many gaping holes that currently exist in the archival record.

It is true that plenty of traditional outreach methods will not touch today's youth in any meaningful way, but the good news is that there are clearly some that can. This claim is based in part on the enthusiasm displayed by the individuals interviewed throughout this thesis. It is also based, however, on the assumption that students and teachers will, if properly familiarized and instructed in how to use archives for educational purposes, also seek to use records outside of educational arenas. The above discussion is a preliminary attempt to identify the strengths and weaknesses of common outreach programs in light of their ability to cultivate a newer, younger user-group. It also

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[5] UNESCO "Memory of the World," http://portal.unesco.org/ci/en/ev.php-URL_ID=1538&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html (accessed Sept. 23, 2008).

provides an analysis of some new developments within educational curriculum that use primary sources as a way of both improving the teaching of history and encouraging archival literacy. Finally, the framework that was constructed upon analysis of those successful programs is relevant and applicable to all kinds of institutions. This investigation is intended to promote more successful, strategic outreach efforts that aim to improve the overall public image of, and respect for records of enduring value by making sure that they are "integrated into popular cultural life and education."[6]

In the future, this author foresees a society that is archives-literate, in which individuals will understand both the scholarly uses of archives, as well as records' ability to promote social responsibility and sound democracies. To realistically create such a society, we must start where the future lies: with today's youth. To quote John J. Grabowski's eloquent mission statement: "We should build a new generation of heritage advocates by attempting to introduce students, from the elementary to the undergraduate level, to the sources of history,"[7] and, in particular, archival documents. Action is needed now, more than ever before, to educate the public about what archives are and what they do. Archivists as activists must seek to secure a permanent social and cultural place for archives, and there is no better place to start than at the beginning with the youth of today.

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[6] Barbara T. Craig, "What are the Clients? Who are the Users? The Future of Archival Public Services in Perspective," *Archivaria* 31 (Winter 1990-1991): 136.

[7] John J. Grabowski, "Keepers, Users, and Funders: Building an Awareness of Archival Value," in Randall C. Jimerson, ed., *American Archival Studies: Reading in Theory and Practice* (Chicago: Society of American Archivists 2000): 624.

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