

From Craft to Profession: The Evolution of Archival Education and Theory in North America

by **ROY SCHAEFFER**

Résumé

La nature réelle du savoir archivistique a suscité de longs débats. Pendant près de soixante ans on s'est interrogé à savoir si les études historiques ou l'initiation au vaste champ des sciences de l'information constituait la meilleure formation pour l'archiviste. Comme pour toutes les carrières en voie de professionnalisation, il y a eu une certaine ambivalence concernant la pertinence d'encadrer l'archiviste dans un programme de second cycle universitaire ou de lui assurer un apprentissage traditionnel en le formant sur le tas dans son milieu de travail. Ce n'est que récemment que les archivistes nord-américains et leurs professeurs ont commencé à évaluer les fondements intellectuels de leur travail et à explorer l'éventail de l'ensemble du savoir archivistique et ses raccordements possibles avec les autres champs d'étude. Dans leur lutte pour la reconnaissance de leur statut professionnel, les archivistes se doivent de reconnaître l'importance fondamentale de la recherche académique et de l'élaboration des théories dans le développement d'une culture archivistique fondamentale et unique.

Abstract

There has been much discussion on the true nature of archivally relevant knowledge. Sixty years of debate has centred on whether the proper preparation of the archivist lies in historical study or exposure to the broad field of information science. As with all aspiring professions, there has also been uncertainty as to whether the archivist can or should be educated in a graduate university environment or trained through traditional on-the-job apprenticeship. Only recently have North American archivists and their educators begun to examine the intellectual basis of their work, to explore the full range of the archival body of knowledge and its possible connections to other fields of study. In their struggle toward true professional status, archivists must recognize the essential nature of academic research and theory construction to the development of a unique and vital archival culture.

The nature and purpose of archival education has been debated in the North American archival community for generations. The remarkable fact remains that, while there has been considerable progress in the creation of standards and dynamic educational programs, the character of the discourse on matters educational within the profession has remained virtually unchanged. The disagreements over academic requirements for practice appear to be grounded upon two contrasting views of archival work. One emphasizes its vocational uniqueness and the richness and complexity of its intellectual content. The other points to the highly practical nature of its functions and its intellectual roots in other disciplines; it insists that its distinct concepts provide no more than a thin philosophical overlay to methodology.¹ It is not a debate characterized by a natural tension between an academically bred elite and the untrained and the "quasi-professional." Nor is it a conflict carried out in the context of established and rival educational approaches. Rather it is based upon a vision of the archival profession and its intellectual potential. It will be the purpose of this article to analyze this debate and to attempt to discern some of the key developments and directions in archival educational thought in North America.

The elucidation of educational ideas and approaches in North America came only with the large scale development of archival institutions and the working profession, both synchronic with the need to manage large volumes of modern records. The archival field today is, as it has been since its origins, a profession of practitioners. The United States and Canada, lacking a long tradition of specialized post-graduate archival education, has determined its educational requirements largely from the practical needs of the modern records archivist "on the ground"—essentially basic training in appraisal, arrangement, and description. The true education or academic preparation of the archivist, following the European tradition, was assumed to rest in a relatively high level of scholarly achievement in historiography prior to entry into the field. This assumption was clearly stated in the Society of American Archivists' first assessment of educational requirements:

It is the historical scholar, equipped now with technical archival training, who dominates the staffs of the best European archives. We think it should be so here, with the emphasis on American history and political science. But there is a distinct danger in turning over archives to librarians who are not at the same time erudite and critical historical scholars.²

There was obviously an early desire to distinguish the work of the archivist from that of the librarian and manuscript curator, to begin the process of professionalization that had been anticipated by Waldo Gifford Leland at the turn of the century: "We must disabuse ourselves of the idea that anyone can become an archivist."³ While a peculiarly archival mind-set based on few relatively simple concepts was assumed, history was viewed as the key preparatory discipline. It was imperative that the archivist have a well-developed historical awareness in order to effectively appraise historical records and discern their enduring value for purposes of research and administration. "Experience in historical research enables one to appreciate how manuscripts and records are used. The archivist must be able to judge the probable value of sources to a scholar or research worker, and this ability can be developed best by personal experience in research."⁴ The users of archival

materials were conventionally considered to be primarily the archivist's natural colleagues, professional historians, and secondarily a general public with an interest in genealogy or local history. Other professional responsibilities, such as the preparation of finding aids and research tools, were assumed to demand significant subject knowledge combined with the scientific objectivity of the historian. A further factor, often alluded to though rarely discussed in any detail, was simply what might be termed the psycho-social sympathies of the historian/archivist to the original document. The historically-trained were presumed to have a natural aptitude and the required cultural dedication to the preservation and care of the record. In the absence of professional education it was this sympathy, this spiritual connection with the work and its objectives, that would generate professional zeal in the cause.

The essentially technical aspects of the archival craft, it was posited, were readily grafted onto this existing scholarly and cultural base. Pragmatic American educational pioneers saw some value in developing the intellectual character of specifically archival instruction, but nonetheless contended that a thorough familiarity with effective and standard methodologies was crucial.⁵ This was partly a reflection of their urgent desire to train staff quickly to take on the pressing task of preserving the documentary heritage, and partly the result of their entirely justified concern that standard methodologies of any kind were sadly lacking. Assisted by a few college courses, methodological training in the first decades of the North American profession was supplied largely by on-the-job instruction at the national archives of both the United States and Canada, supported by texts and manuals that presented a minimum of theory and a maximum of practical guidance.⁶

The assumptions upon which this level of education and training were based began to be challenged by the 1960s and 1970s. The challenge was occasioned by a number of developments, including the changing nature of the record and the user, the dramatic growth in the profession resulting in a new concern for professional identity and professional standards, and a changing and increasingly insecure economic environment. The river of modern textual records, with which the first generation of North American archivists had been forced to contend, was now joined by tributaries of new media including machine-readable records and audio and video recordings. With the increasing scope of materials, the use of archives also expanded to include social and physical scientists and a wide variety of community research interests. There was a growing appreciation that those working in archives required more sophisticated and specialized training in technical areas and that the study of history as an academic preparation was now unrealistically, and perhaps dangerously, narrow.⁷

By the 1970s, post-war economic growth gave way to economic uncertainty and considerable competition for both cultural and administrative dollars. Ironically, this occurred just when archival institutions were enjoying a remarkable period of growth and archivists were beginning to feel a strong need to assert their identity and peculiar role in the administrative and cultural worlds. The information age, which provided some of the explanation for the emergence of archives in numbers and importance, also presented new challenges in the form of "information science" and the impetus to refine and enhance both theory and methodology—

potentially the basis for a new and genuine professionalism. As George Bolotenko has observed: "Under the exigencies of the modern era, responding to the demands of the geist of technology which has so suffused the last several decades ... some archivists resolved to seek a newer sleeker image, a new archival ethos."⁸ There was undeniably a "desire for increased definition of professional standards and professional culture, and concern with the new milieu and expanding influence of the information specialist."⁹ The twentieth century and its works had truly caught up with archivists, though arguably the forces toward professionalism would have been compelling even without the added impetus of the information age.

It has been observed that professionalization is a "dynamic process whereby many occupations can be observed to change certain crucial characteristics in the direction of a "profession" even though some of these may not move very far in this direction."¹⁰ Amid the insecurities and ambitions engendered by this new age, archivists could, as with librarians, quite accurately be described as a "skilled occupation on its way to becoming a profession."¹¹ Since the nineteenth century the archival field had developed a relatively complex array of principles and methodologies. Through its professional organizations it had achieved a level of self-awareness and collegiality. The character of its work and its raw materials dictated a particular mind-set as with any specialized occupational group. However, if the field was to become a distinct profession—and many doubted that it had progressed far in that direction—then substantial initiatives had to be taken. Certainly there was a pressing need for a reevaluation of the archivist's role in society and his or her intellectual equipment. This need, combined with the erosion of the traditional history-based academic consensus, revived discussion of education and training requirements.

In their attempts to define the requirements for true professionalism and its educational foundations, archivists inevitably turned, as had librarians and other "marginal professions" before them, to accepted sociological definitions.¹² Students of the professions have laid out many criteria, some of them contradictory and overlapping. In general, however, they agree upon the requirements of a long period of university-based education in a body of theory and principles, combined with a dedication to the ideal of public service.

A profession is a vocation whose practice is founded upon an understanding of the theoretical structure of some department of learning or science, and upon the abilities accompanying such understanding. This understanding and these abilities are applied to the vital practical affairs of man. The practices of the profession are modified by knowledge of a generalized nature and by the accumulated wisdom and experience of mankind, which serve to correct the errors of specialism. The profession, serving the vital needs of man, considers its first ethical imperative to be altruistic service to the client.¹³

Archivists could be quite secure in their commitment to the ideal of public service, but theoretical education in an archival discipline (or even basic standards of training and practice) was seriously lacking. Both the Society of American Archivists and the Association of Canadian Archivists had been established, in part, in the hopes of creating such standards and both were called upon to fulfil their mandate in the design of effective criteria for admission and professional conduct in the public interest.

The profession has a responsibility to regulate itself—to assure that a person formally designated as an archivist meets certain specified standards agreed upon by the profession, and that archival training programs provide certain fundamental information and experience and maintain conditions under which the achievement of basic professional knowledge can reasonably be expected.¹⁴

The drive to professionalism made the definition of the core of professional knowledge, “fundamental information,” imperative. At the same time a whole set of new technical training requirements were being identified. As in all professions, archival education was to realize three key objectives: imparting basic principles; training in the practical activities of the profession; socializing students to the norms of the profession. Most aspiring professions found that these requirements were best achieved in an academic environment. Intensive university-based study in theory and practice provided a conceptual grounding, a distinctive qualification and, hopefully, enhanced status and legitimacy in society. “Regardless of how many dimensions of professionalism are cited ... that “true” professions have a long and usually university-based education is probably the most noted characteristic associated with professionalism.”¹⁵ In the archival world, however, this requirement was not readily accepted.

That the progress toward an academic basis for archival studies and the development of an archival science in North America has been a slow and often painful one should come as no surprise. The experience of such highly developed “true professions” as law, medicine, or accounting has followed much the same course. It was not until the mid- to late-nineteenth century or even the twentieth century that truly professional instruction was offered in these fields. Battles raged over the value of academic and theoretical instruction, and indeed as to whether any genuine theory existed. In Victorian Britain, for example, “debate as to the role of the universities in legal education began with practitioners such as Lord Halsbury suggesting that universities had no role because the only things lawyers needed to be interested in is how to recover costs under the County Courts Act.”¹⁶ It was traditionally assumed that the basic principles and norms of the profession would be conveyed through practical interaction between the student and the members of the profession, an apprenticeship system that had the added benefit of providing regular contact with the client public as well.¹⁷ The development of academic programs often came only as a result of external and legislative pressure and was coupled with considerable professional anxiety that the curriculum and management of the programs be under professional direction and control. There was particular concern that the relationship between the student and the professional remain intimate through some, at the very least, vestigial form of apprenticeship.¹⁸

These same issues of content and control marked the archival educational debate over the last two decades. It revealed a remarkable level of professional insecurity, a surprising streak of anti-intellectualism, and the pervasiveness of that archival individualism that has always dogged efforts to develop professional and institutional standards.

A profound scepticism about the existence of a theoretical basis of archival work and hence the validity of university-based instruction, though widely held, was not

often articulated by practising archivists. John Roberts, one of the few who have written in compelling fashion on the subject, contends that the intellectual content of archival work rests entirely in historiography. While he grants that "it is not harmful and is in some respects pleasant to chat about" questions of theory and methodology there is "no need for archives academicians to develop dogma on these points."¹⁹ In this, his views do not differ from those of distinguished archivists of an earlier generation, such as Herman Kahn, who observed that "most of the truly professional training of an archivist comes before he is given any specifically archival training."²⁰ However, where Kahn and others allowed that genuinely archival ideas might be developed (and indeed that archivists had an obligation to develop them²¹), Roberts categorically rejects their existence or potential. He provides his own hierarchy of useful knowledge:

Above all, it should be remembered that archivy *per se* is a fairly straight-forward, down to earth occupation; it is not a liberal science, and it is not be confused with the cultural and historical treasures held by archival repositories. The knowledge that archivists must have to be effective can easily be summarized: they need to know procedures and technology; they need to know the ethics of the profession and what is expected of them; they need to know history; and they especially need to know their records. Everything else is either unnecessary or will fall into place well enough without the mediation of priesthood of theorists.²²

Roberts's contention that exposure to practical procedures, combined with an appreciation of the norms of the occupational group, are the primary educational requirements for an archivist presents not the position of the historian, but the clear voice of the traditional practitioner in any field. It is the voice of the nineteenth-century lawyer or doctor. It occurs naturally where actual vocational practices have not been constructed upon a theoretical base and where they tend to the mundane and routine in their execution. It has been found in librarianship, where, even after a century of academic study and methodological development,

most day-to-day professional work utilizes rather concrete, rule-of-thumb, local regulations and rules, and major cataloguing system. The problems of selection and organization are dealt with on a highly empiricist basis, concretely, and with little reference to general scientific principles. Moreover, little if any of the current research in librarianship attempts to develop such general principles.²³

Roberts's views also reflect the common American belief, expressed eloquently by Schellenberg, that all archival institutions are unique, with peculiar individual concerns and justly idiosyncratic methods determined by the particular requirements of their holdings and their social and political circumstances.²⁴ In this highly differentiated environment, it is not universal archival theories, but a general academic knowledge, a dedication to the varied interests of the records creator and user, and finely-tuned analytical skills that must be brought to bear. This flexibility and responsiveness to particular conditions, indeed, is presumed to be threatened by straightjackets of theory, conceptual labyrinths, and professional rigidity and arrogance.²⁵ As Roberts puts it: "Archival theory does two things that are profoundly threatening to clarity of thought: it overcomplicates that which is simple, and it oversimplifies that which is complicated."²⁶

These fears regarding the narrowness and elitism of a “discipline” of archives are closely tied to general concerns about the relationship of education to practice. Traditional practitioners, essentially self-taught or trained within an institutional environment, are suspicious of education that does not provide for the same level of practical instruction. They are naturally resistant to sharing professional status with those who have only paper qualifications, and they may be resistant to the social pressures to accept “yet more dreary and unsatisfactory schooling because it will at least lead to a certificate.”²⁷ It has been commonly agreed, at least in North America, that archival work is as much craft as it is science and that archival instruction must therefore contain a large dose of “clinical” instruction and exposure to day-to-day archival work. “If archives is a craft, then the best way to learn to do archival work is on the job.”²⁸ Hence the continuing attraction of the apprenticeship mode of induction and the determination, even where academic preparation is endorsed, that apprenticeship be introduced in the form of an internship or a practicum. Thus the innovative curriculum guidelines of the Association of Canadian Archivists in 1976 assumed that only a combination of courses and experience would produce a “program acceptable to the university as well as to the profession.”²⁹ The profession should, according to this view, guard against a higher education that would weaken its “roots in the real world.”³⁰ The role of the university should be restricted to perhaps the refinement of methodologies and the production of graduates who are competent and immediately become productive members of the vocational community, all under the watchful eye of education committees.

There is certainly nothing unusual about professional organizations insisting upon a continuing and active role in education. Many expect to be involved in curriculum design and in matters of admission and apprenticeship placement. They may also ensure their continuing authority through a school accreditation process. In the archival community, however, the continuing concern that education be closely attached to the profession too often reflects a narrowness of perspective and a reluctance to admit an academic role beyond training. This is indicated in the often expressed desire that programs of instruction be kept out of the hands of full-time academics—an appeal to the “old craft mystique argument” that archives must be taught by practitioners, even in the universities.³¹ This is a commonplace in professions that relied initially upon practitioners with an interest in teaching to assume the academic role. In archives, it betrays a limited view of the intellectual content of the field.³² The practitioner/teacher will often lack the time and the inclination to explore in the world of ideas, naturally that of the professional academic, and will inevitably be concerned to impart his/her wealth of practical knowledge and technical expertise. It has been accurately observed that “this reliance on the practising archivists [for teaching] overemphasises practice at the expense of theoretical research.”³³

Issues of content and control are readily discernable in discussions that progressed through the pages of *American Archivist* and *Archivaria*. The stream of articles and commentaries, particularly through the 1960s and 1970s, clearly reveal how meagre the profession’s estimate was of its own intellectual stock. Discussion focused almost exclusively on the appropriate location of instruction, whether in the library school or the history faculty, evidence that both intellectual content and

innovative methodology were judged to be inevitably acquired from other sources.³⁴ The question was reduced to whether the future of archives lay in a) the continued primary application of historical research skills and sensitivities or b) a new emphasis on library-style descriptive and retrieval techniques in response to the presumably progressive demands of information science. The schizophrenic character of the archivist remained.

In almost 40 years of debate about archival training, no one has been able to get away from the fact that one can learn to be an archivist only after receiving training elsewhere in another discipline. Like Goethe's Faust, two souls dwell in the archivist's breast, and one is continually tearing away at the other. "Almost every archivist has a divided heart. Whether he is primarily an archivist or primarily something else seems to depend in good part upon where he is and with whom he is speaking."³⁵

Such resistance as was offered to this continued intellectual reliance was too often couched in terms of a blanket rejection of both the related disciplines, partly the natural "attitude of exclusivity" that is a concomitant of professional development.³⁶ It was not attended by insights into the opportunities of archival scholarship, but rather exposed a frustration with the invasion of imperfectly socialized library graduates and history Ph.D.s at a time when genuinely distinct professional development seemed a real possibility.³⁷

In neither the United States nor Canada could a consensus on the appropriate location and character of archival education be reached. The Society of American Archivists's "Committee of the 1970s" examined the problem and reiterated the practitioner's creed: "Because of the nature of the materials with which the archivist deals and because of the nature of his responsibilities with regard to these materials, the training necessary for an archivist should be firmly rooted in experience."³⁸ The Committee went on to suggest that no education beyond basic training was required and stated that "our best interests as a profession are not served by attempts to develop separate degree programs in our colleges and universities for archives administration."³⁹ The lack of vision of the committee is striking, but perhaps not surprising. Not only did it have to contend with a reluctance to admit a place for academic instruction, but it faced a number of well established academic oxen reluctant to be gored by new and distinctive education programs. The inability or reluctance of the Society of American Archivists to give serious consideration to the central ingredients of intellectual preparation for the archivist was a great disappointment to many with an interest in education and professionalization. Ultimately, profession-building and the need for accepted qualifications was answered in the United States by the publication of general curriculum guidelines and the introduction of a certification process via examination through an arm of the SAA, the Academy of Certified Archivists.

The same debate regarding educational location occurred in Canada, with archival courses beginning to appear in library schools and with library academics suggesting the many areas of "common ground."⁴⁰ As already noted, curriculum guidelines were developed by the Association of Canadian Archivists in 1976, and within five years professional education concerns led to a full program of university-based education associated with a library school. Though the initiative

was more academic than professional, the Association of Canadian Archivists was a significant and supportive player.⁴¹ The Association's agenda was clearly a professional one in that it wished to ensure effective training in the management of modern records, but it did recognize that the ultimate purpose of the university was scholarship.

The University of British Columbia program, though significant in providing a precedent for full-scale academic instruction, did not resolve the major issues of education. In the United States, as well as in Canada, the discussion around the need for education in basic concepts highlighted the absence of agreement on the nature of archival knowledge itself. As Herman Kahn was to observe, "... the harsh fact is that if we are going to train professional archivists we must first decide what an archivist is and does."⁴² The question as to whether the future offered a place for education that was peculiarly archival in its content and approach remained open. There is perhaps an irony, as observed by Hugh Taylor and others, that the archival profession was examining distinctive professional education at a time when occupational specialization seemed to be breaking down and when archivists themselves were looking ever more seriously to other disciplines for ideas and approaches.⁴³ Harmonization of studies in archives, librarianship, documentation, and information systems seemed a laudable ambition in the effort to "strengthen the core of information professionals who speak for users in an information society."⁴⁴ Its value was hotly argued, particularly within library academe, and was embraced by prominent archival educators who saw the future of archives squarely within the context of management of the global "information stock."⁴⁵

The appeal, and the undoubted relevance, of the information sciences has been a continuing source of excitement and tension for those concerned with education. It has, however, deflected attention from a need to define the content spectrum of archival graduate instruction and, by extension, the basis of archival claims to professional status. "The failure to define adequately the nature of the intellectual problem means that practitioners themselves often fail to see the challenge of developing the field."⁴⁶ The challenge presented to archival education in the academic environment is common to all professional education and is twofold: to develop a compelling and coherent body of theory, and to make education in this theory relevant to the practice of archives in order, at the very least, to develop an identity and a vocational commitment on the part of the student. "It is a common and difficult problem in any professional induction programme to determine how best to equip students with an appropriate background of theory and an armoury of relevant practical skills, while also demonstrating the relevance of each to the other."⁴⁷

Obviously, the first task is to develop archival theory for

... the skills that characterize a professional flow from and are supported by a fund of knowledge that has been organized into an internally consistent system, called a body of theory. A profession's underlying body of theory is a system of abstract propositions that describe in general terms the classes of phenomena comprising the profession's focus of interest. Theory serves as a base in terms of which the professional rationalizes his operations in concrete situations. Acquisition of the professional skill requires a prior or simultaneous mastery of the theory underlying that skill. Preparation for a profession,

therefore, involves considerable pre-occupation with systematic theory, a feature virtually absent in the training of the non-professional... Because understanding of theory is so important to professional skill, preparation for a profession must be an intellectual as well as a practical experience. On-the-job training through apprenticeship, which suffices for a nonprofessional occupation, become inadequate for a profession.⁴⁸

Through reasoned argument and the inculcation of this body of theory, the confidence and the intellectual competence of the novice professional is developed, along with the conceptual base of the field. Many thoughtful members of the profession have insisted upon the need for a conceptual base and an acceptance of an academic archival culture, in the belief that "experience alone cannot make a professional archivist any more than could experience in the practice of medicine without theoretical training qualify one."⁴⁹ Frank Burke has observed that we are "producing a large corps of parish priests when no one has bothered to devise a theology under whose standard they can act."⁵⁰ He added, however, that it "...is fair to say therefore, that, to date, there has been no elucidation of archival theory in the United States and little, if any, in the rest of the world."⁵¹

Burke's final point is no longer valid, if indeed it was a decade ago. As Luciana Duranti has indicated in her recent paper, "The Archival Body of Knowledge," European archival educators and thinkers have developed a very sizeable body of theory over the last three centuries that may be usefully mined for analysis of all aspects of archival activity.⁵² In North America, the decades of discussion and analysis, and the experience of the profession in examining its own role in the community, have clearly revealed where the substance of archival theory lies. It must be drawn from the unique area of concern of the archivist: the creation, preservation, and use of recorded information. "Banal as it is to say, the focus of archival studies is the nature of archives, not even the nature of the archivist's duties, for everything flows from an understanding of the nature of the things unto which things are done."⁵³ This includes a profound understanding of the nature and form of archival materials and their context, and how these have changed over time. An understanding of the record may then be combined with an appreciation of its limitation as evidence or research source, its treatment and effective exploitation for use.

The promise of an intellectually dynamic profession is beginning to be realized, even in an environment that has for so long prided itself on its lack of sophisticated concepts. The opportunities presented by archival study, perhaps for the very reason that it is virgin territory, are almost unlimited. As early as 1941, Solon Buck observed that like other sciences, archives is and must be "compounded of parts of many other sciences or fields of knowledge."⁵⁴ Hugh Taylor and others have pointed out that the theoretical base can be drawn from an application to archival questions of research in such varied areas as communications theory, speculative philosophy, sociology, and psychology.⁵⁵ The historical and investigative talents of the archivists can be exercised in the evaluation of the growth and progress of the profession and its institutions, and what this may inform us as to the place of the record in our culture. There is an entire field of investigation in the history of the record, the roots and evolution of our society's relationship with documentation, its

cultural, economic, and social importance. Archival academics must scan the entire world of knowledge with the focused eyes of their discipline. They have the task to interpret the dynamic changes in society and its methods of communication within the context of our unique requirement as professionals to understand these developments. They must also promote a corresponding sophistication in archival analysis and methodology in practice.

It is thus the role of graduate education to develop what may be termed "archival thinking," an elaboration of an intellectual *weltanschauung* that covers all aspects of the record and society. This integrated multi-disciplinary approach cannot be achieved simply through the introduction of courses from other disciplines into the archival curriculum. It requires that all appropriate knowledge be synthesized and integrated into this archival understanding. As already indicated, a truly academic program cannot and will not be rigid, for theories and applications must constantly undergo reassessment and revision.

Sceptics notwithstanding, the elaboration of theoretical concepts are not the artificial creations of an ivory tower, abstractions manufactured in a desperate drive for intellectual credibility.⁵⁶ They are the natural response of a growing and increasingly sophisticated profession seeking to understand and describe its role. The profession must recognize that the development of the conceptual base is a necessary ingredient in the self-respect and confidence of the practitioner. It is also essential to justify that community respect and support so necessary to the survival of the documentary heritage. In this sense, theory is an eminently practical commodity. Through the academic investigation of the body of ideas specific to our own concerns, we develop a sense of our own specific professional purposes and ideals. Through study we gain an appreciation of a rich and dynamic archival culture, as organic in character as the records in our care. It provides us with a heritage of our own field of endeavour, a heritage which we have often sought to deny ourselves while celebrating it in all other elements of society. Research towards theory-building imbues the archivist with that sense of rootedness, of intellectual and spiritual continuity, of connections with a great ideal, that we require as much as the institutions and communities we serve.

The profession must further accept that it is the place of an archival program resident in a university to speculate on the essential nature of activities and phenomenon, to develop, to articulate, and to refine these theories through research, discussion, and the observation of application.

The importance of theory precipitates a form of activity normally not encountered in a nonprofessional occupation, viz theory construction via systematic research. To generate valid theory that will provide a solid base for professional techniques requires the application of the scientific method to the service-related problems of the professional. Continued employment of the scientific method is nurtured by and in turn reinforces the element of rationality. As an orientation, rationality is the antithesis of traditionalism. The spirit of rationality in a profession encourages a critical, as opposed to a reverential attitude toward the theoretical system. It implies a perpetual readiness to discard any portion of that system, no matter how time-honoured it may be, with a formulation demonstrated to more valid. The spirit of rationality generates group

self-criticism and theoretical controversy. Professional members convene regularly in the association to learn and evaluate innovations in theory. This produces an intellectually stimulating milieu that is in marked contrast with the milieu of the nonprofessional occupation.⁵⁷

As Paul Conway recently noted, a scholarly "critical mass" is required in North America sufficient to actually produce the kind of investigation, creative analysis, and compelling exposition that will prove the academic potential of archival research and thought.⁵⁸ This demands a clear distinction between the academic and the practitioner, with some attendant tension. Whatever the dangers of "two solitudes—one concerned primarily with lofty ends, the other with everyday means," we require academic professionals to make those necessary intellectual contributions.⁵⁹ Only in this way can we break the "cycle of poverty in archival theory" observed by Richard Cox.⁶⁰

In addition, the profession must accept the student as more than an embryonic archivist, as an academic creature dedicated primarily to the assimilation and analysis of concepts and competent to determine the connections between theory and practice. They are engaged in graduate education programs to acquire archival knowledge and to gain "the ability to analyze and synthesize, to see the big picture, to separate a seemingly overwhelming problem into manageable parts and to solve it."⁶¹ The university should be viewed as a wellspring of energy and imagination for the profession, a place that provides, as with all disciplines, our place to dream.

To say that archival education must be more than vocational school training is to do no more than echo the opinions of a dozen commentators. Programs of archival studies must be firmly committed to intellectual goals, and while it would be unwise to lose an intimate connection with the changing requirements of practice, it has its own role to play in the life of the profession. As has been noted by one student of archival education: "We cannot *train* people for [work in archives]. To do so is to tie them to this place and moment. But we can educate people who can see the values of the past, are ready for the unexpected in the present, and will be inventive in anticipating and meeting the forces of the future."⁶²

Notes

- 1 Frank Burke, "Education," in Robert L. Clark, ed., *Archives-Library Relations* (New York, 1976), p. 58.
- 2 Samuel Flagg Bemis, "The Training of Archivists in the United States," *American Archivist* 2 (July 1939), p. 157.
- 3 American Historical Association, *Annual Report...1909*, p. 348, as quoted in H.G. Jones, "Archival Training in American Universities," *American Archivist* 31 (April 1968), p. 135.
- 4 W. Kaye Lamb, "The Modern Archivist: Formally Trained or Self-Educated," *American Archivist* 31 (April 1968), p. 176.
- 5 "Henry Steele Commager refers to 'an intense practicality,' in American thought, extending to most matters, and asserts that pragmatism can almost be called the 'official philosophy of America.'" Harold Pinkett, "American Archival Theory: The State of the Art," *American Archivist* 44 (Summer 1981), p. 217.
- 6 F.R. Evans, "Postappointment Archival Training: A Proposed Solution for a Basic Problem," *American Archivist* 40 (January 1977), p. 60.
- 7 Peter J. Wosh, "Creating a SemiProfessional Profession: Archivists View Themselves," *Georgia Archives* 10 (Fall 1982), p. 6.
- 8 George Bolotenko, "Archivists and Historians: Keepers of the Well," *Archivaria* 16 (Summer 1983), p. 24.

- 9 Richard Cox, *American Archival Analysis: Recent Development of the Archival Profession in the United States* (Metuchen, 1990), p. 268.
- 10 *Ibid.*, p. 1.
- 11 William Goode, "The Librarian: From Occupation to Profession?" reprinted in *Ibid.*, p. 38.
- 12 An extensive discussion of various interpretations of professionalization can be found in Vollmer, *Professionalization*. The best archival analysis, utilizing sociological tools, is Richard Cox, "Professionalism and Archivists in the United States," *American Archivist* 49 (Summer 1986), pp. 229-47.
- 13 Morris L. Cogan, "Toward a Definition of Profession," *Harvard University Review* 23 (Winter 1953), p. 49.
- 14 Trudy H. Peterson, Patrick M. Quinn, and Hugh A. Taylor, "Professional Archival Training," *American Archivist* 40 (July 1977), p. 315.
- 15 John B. Cullen, *The Structure of Professionalism* (New York, 1978), p. 76.
- 16 M.H. Ogilvie, *Historical Introduction to Legal Studies* (Toronto, 1982), p. 340.
- 17 H.H. McDermid, *One Hundred Years of Medicine in Canada* (Toronto, 1967), p. 111.
- 18 "History of Legal Education in Ontario," *The Law Society of Upper Canada Gazette* 6 (December 1972), p. 47.
- 19 John Roberts, "Much Ado About Shelving," *American Archivist* 50 (Winter 1987), p. 72. See also Roberts, "Practice Makes Perfect, Theory Makes Theorists," appearing elsewhere in this issue of *Archivaria*.
- 20 Herman Kahn, "Some Comments on the Archival Vocation," *American Archivist* 34 (January 1971), p. 5.
- 21 *Ibid.*, p. 10.
- 22 Roberts, "Much Ado About Shelving," p. 74.
- 23 Vollmer, *Professionalization*, p. 38.
- 24 T.R. Schellenberg, *Modern Archives: Principles and Techniques* (Chicago, 1956), p. 15.
- 25 The assumption that professionalism may be equated with rigidity, conservatism, and self-interest would appear to be common in the client-centred world of the information sciences. This can be seen in several articles responding to the contention that librarians are chronic 'marginal professionals': William F. Birdsall, "Librarians and Professionalism," *Canadian Library Journal* 37 (June 1980), pp. 145-50, and Gardner Hanks and C. James Schmidt, "An Alternative Model of a Profession for Librarians," *College and Research Libraries* 36 (May 1975), pp. 175-87.
- 26 John Roberts, "Archival Theory: Myth or Banality?" *American Archivist* 53 (1990), p. 111.
- 27 Terry Eastwood, "Education and the Profession - Counterpoint," *Archivaria* 1 (Winter 1975-76), p. 106.
- 28 Peterson et al., "Professional Archival Training," p. 316. Practitioners and thoughtful students from Ernst Posner to Kaye Lamb have questioned whether archives can be taught: "No one can become an archivist just by frequenting a classroom; professional training must be associated with and based firmly upon practical experience." W. Kaye Lamb, "The Modern Archivist: Formally Trained or Self-Educated," *American Archivist* 31 (April 1968), p. 176.
- 29 Quoted in Terry Eastwood, "The Origins and Aims of the Master of Archival Studies Programme at the University of British Columbia," *Archivaria* 16 (Summer 1983), p. 36.
- 30 Peterson et al., "Professional Archival Training," p. 319.
- 31 Frank Burke, "The Future Course of Archival Theory in the United States," *American Archivist* 44 (Winter 1981), p. 44.
- 32 "The tradition of independence from the traditional academic system has gradually given place to a transfer of training responsibilities from practitioners to academics: a shift which, in the case of relatively low-status 'minor professions', is reinforced by the expectation that graduate-level qualifications will enhance their standing in society. The resulting distinctions - between those who induct new recruits into the profession and those who practise it from day to day - pose questions about the nature of the knowledge base." Tony Becher, "Professional Education in a Comparative Context," in Rolf Torstendahl and Michael Burrage, eds., *The Formation of Professions: Knowledge, State and Strategy* (London, 1990), p. 134.
- 33 L.J. McCrank, "Prospects for Integrating Historical and Information Studies in Archival Education," *American Archivist* 42 (October 1979), p. 449.
- 34 The discussion was exemplified in the exchange between H.G. Jones, "Archival Training in American Universities, 1938-1968," *American Archivist* 31 (April 1968), pp. 135-54, and T.R. Schellenberg, "Archival Training in Library Schools," *American Archivist* 31 (April 1966), pp. 155-66. They were joined by many other observers concerned with the education and training question.

- 35 Burke, "Education," p. 59.
- 36 Margaret S. Child, "Reflections on Cooperation Among Professions," *American Archivist* 46 (Summer 1983), p. 287.
- 37 Peterson et al., "Professional Archival Training," p. 317.
- 38 Philip P. Mason, "Report of the Committee for the 1970s," *American Archivist* 35 (April 1972), p. 207.
- 39 *Ibid.*, p. 209.
- 40 Janet Fyfe, "Archival Education - Counterpoint," *Archivaria* 5 (1978), p. 185.
- 41 Terry Eastwood, "The Origins and Aims of the Master of Archival Studies Programme at the University of British Columbia," *Archivaria* 16 (Summer 1983), p. 46.
- 42 Herman Kahn, "Some Comments on the Archival Vocation," *American Archivist* 34 (January 1971), p. 5.
- 43 Peterson et al., "Archival Professional Training," p. 318.
- 44 A. Fasick, P. Fleming, F. Halpenny, B. Land, and N. Williamson, "Proposal for an Archival Studies Program in the Faculty of Library and Information Science at the University of Toronto," January 1992. Unpublished internal University of Toronto document.
- 45 Michael Cook, *The Management of Information from Archives* (London, 1986), p. 9. Cook has become a leading exponent of harmonization, as evidenced in his "Combined Library and Archive Training Schools. A Commentary on Recent Trends," in *Proceedings of the 10th International Congress on Archives* (Munich, 1986).
- 46 Vollmer, *Professionalization*, 40.
- 47 Becher, "Professional Education," p. 142.
- 48 *Ibid.*, p. 11.
- 49 Solon Buck, "The Training of American Archivists," *American Archivist* 4 (April 1941), p. 89.
- 50 Frank Burke, "The Future Course of Archival Theory in the United States," *American Archivist* 44 (Winter 1981), p. 44.
- 51 *Ibid.*, p. 42.
- 52 Luciana Duranti, "The Archival Body of Knowledge: Archival Theory, Method and Practice, and Graduate and Continuing Education", *Journal of Education for Library and Information Science* 34, no. 1 (Winter 1993), pp. 8-24. We are beginning to discover the value in translating the contributions of such contemporary European colleagues as Elio Lodolini, Michel Duchein, and Hans Booms. In a relatively recent Master of Archival Studies thesis, Richard Klumpenhouwer has indicated both the intellectual richness of European thought and how this wealth may assist North Americans to find some sense of cultural context and, indeed, a professional heritage. Richard Klumpenhouwer, "Concepts of Value in the Archival Appraisal Literature: An Historical and Critical Analysis," (MAS Thesis, University of British Columbia, 1988).
- 53 Terry Eastwood, "Nurturing Archival Education in the University," *American Archivist* 51 (Summer 1988), p. 245.
- 54 Solon Buck, "The Training of American Archivists," *American Archivist* 4 (April 1941), p. 84.
- 55 Hugh A. Taylor, "The Discipline of History and the Education of the Archivist," *American Archivist* 40 (October 1977), pp. 397-402. A full discussion of Hugh Taylor's contribution to education and thinking appears in Tom Nesmith, "Hugh Taylor's Contextual Idea for Archives and the Foundation of Graduate Education in Archival Studies," in Barbara L. Craig, ed., *The Archival Imagination: Essays in Honour of Hugh A. Taylor* (Ottawa, 1992), pp. 13-37.
- 56 John Roberts, "Archival Theory: Myth or Banality?" *American Archivist* 53 (1990), p. 111.
- 57 Vollmer, *Professionalization*, p. 12.
- 58 Paul Conway, "Archival Education and the Need for Full-Time Faculty," *American Archivist* 51 (Summer 1988), p. 261.
- 59 Terry Eastwood, "Two Solitudes in Archives - A Letter to the Editor," *Archivaria* 5, p. 5.
- 60 Cox, "Professionalism and Archivists," p. 237. For his latest statement on the value of university education, see Richard Cox, "The Master of Archival Studies and the American Education Standards: An Argument for the Continued Development of Graduate Archival Education in the United States," *Archivaria* 36 (Autumn 1993), pp. 221-231.
- 61 Toni Carbo Bearman, "The Education of Archivists: Future Challenges for Schools of Library and Information Science," *Journal of Education for Library and Information Science* 34, no. 1 (Winter 1993), p. 71.
- 62 Allan Du Pont Breck, "New Dimensions in the Education of American Archivists," *American Archivist* 29 (April 1965), p. 185.