

## Existential Archives: Looking To the Value Propositions of Archives and Special Collections

Presented at the ARL CNI Forum

An Age of Discovery : Distinctive Collections in the Digital Age

October 15, 2009

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“The worst thing that could possibly happen to anybody...would be to not be used by anyone for anything.” *Kurt Vonnegut*<sup>1</sup>

So we have been asked to speak about the “value proposition” of special collections this afternoon. In this quote from a character in *Sirens of Titan*, Vonnegut sums up one half of my assessment of the value of special collections—to be used...and used often, well, and even passionately. I will go so far as to say that everything—everything—a special collections archivist, curator, or librarian does should be done with this in mind. Use, in its most general sense, is, to quote a groundbreaking archival author of the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, “the end of all archival effort.”<sup>2</sup>

The second half of my assessment of the value of special collections is summed up by last year’s “Report of the WorldCat Local Special Collections and Archives Task Force,” which states flatly, “The rare books, manuscripts, archives, and other special collections materials in research libraries have become widely recognized as the hallmarks of distinction of individual academic libraries, as their general collections become increasing homogenized through the acquisition of licensed content and digitized books.”<sup>3</sup> In a 2005 article in the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, one ARL library dean went a full step forward, and declared that important special collections “could be the best way to set a library, or an entire institution, apart.”<sup>4</sup>

Before I proceed to expand on my assessment of the value of special collections, and most particularly the first half, permit me to digress for a moment. While I will often speak broadly of special collections I am more specifically an archivist, and will sometimes speak more expressly of archives. Let me also then clarify that when I use the term “archivist” or “archives” I will include both the literal university archives and the manuscripts collections often administered alongside them. Hence when I use the term “archivist” I will encompass both those individuals titled archivists and those titled manuscripts curators. As a professional, I have been both an official archivist and a manuscript curator; in addition, for seven years now I have also

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<sup>1</sup> Kurt Vonnegut, *Sirens of Titan* (New York, 1959 [1974 Paperback Edition]), p. 130

<sup>2</sup> Theodore Schellenberg, *Modern Archives: Principles and Techniques* (Chicago, 1956), p.224.

<sup>3</sup> OCLC, “Report of the WorldCat Local Special Collections and Archives Task Force,” 2008, p. 1, online at <http://www.orbiscascade.org/index/cms-filesystem-action?file=nwda/files/finalreportwclspeccolltaskforce-1.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> Scott Carlson, “Special Effects: College Librarians Highlight Rare Collections to Help Build Support for Their Institutions,” *Chronicle of Higher Education*, 51: 41 (17 June 2005), p. A23.

administered a rare books library, and earlier in my career even administered certain functions of a major museum. Most generally, then, I live in and love the world of special collections.

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Unfortunately, one of the aspects of use still controversial among special collections professionals, is the breadth of use to be encouraged. That is, particularly, whether special collections should be considered largely off limits to undergraduates, and completely off limits to students in grades 6-12 and members of the public. For example, the 2005 *Chronicle* article implied several things about the use of special collections, not only that many repositories still restricted use to “qualified scholars,” but also that such efforts that were being made to open archives and rare books to undergraduates and grade schools were prompted by superficial—or worse—reasons—for example that using special collections for show and tell was all the “use” that many special collections librarians called for. The article also suggested that even superficial use of special collections by wider audiences hit the profession like a lightning bolt in 2005, in the midst of university scandals and budget shortfalls, and that the campaign for expanded use was in some instances nothing more than a smokescreen to placate angry constituents of public institutions or an awakening by development officers to the financial assets under control of special collections.<sup>5</sup>

Certainly I don’t expect us to believe everything we read in the *Chronicle*. However, there is abundant evidence that the special collections community continues to wrestle with the degree to which it should expand use. Rare book librarians, special collections curators, and archivists have for too long treated their collections as ends in themselves; the tidy books or boxes on shelves as the point of their work, regarding with protection at best and displeasure at worst the requests by even “qualified scholars” to possibly sully or disorganize their precious “things.” Collecting, not even cataloging, was their end. There are still too many archives and special collections that hold this worldview. I know this both from talking to researchers, but also from the fact that when archivists from the AHC gave presentations at the Society of American Archivists on our active outreach to grades 6-12 and undergraduates, they received comments indicating quite clearly that some of our colleagues were thoroughly surprised while a few

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<sup>5</sup> The article also implied that an important reason propelling the opening of special collections even superficially was universities wanting to distract their communities from public relations disasters. The article led off with the special collections librarian at the University of Colorado, paraphrasing, “if there is any university that needs to connect with the public right now, [the librarian] notes, it’s hers. So in a state where taxpayers are resentful of outspoken professors and badly behaved football players, Ms. Hollis is waging a public-relations campaign using the riches she guards.” A second reason for the opening of special collections, the article suggested, was that universities had discovered the payoff of “trying to turn their library’s rare holdings into promotional and marketing tools for their institutions.... Such collections may...help attract financial and political support, as libraries increasingly find themselves raising money to make up for budget shortfalls.”

thought we were quite mad.<sup>6</sup> A 2006 survey of ARL special collections discovered that a full third declined to host any pre-college classes.<sup>7</sup>

And, based on the published literature, there is some reason for believing that the issue of serving more than qualified scholars had come to prominence in ARL only at the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.<sup>8</sup> On the other hand, literature and sessions of the Society of American Archivists debating the expansion of user service dates to the 1980s, though the centrality of use to overall archives administration was and remains controversial.<sup>9</sup> Major manuscripts repositories such as the Minnesota Historical Society, where I worked for a decade, date their outreach and service to grade school and undergraduate students to the 1970s, as do other public repositories such as state archives. My own repository, part of a land grant university, began aggressive outreach to undergraduates and grades 6-12 in 1991, though the decision to do so was as much pushed from the school's upper administration as by the archival professionals.

At least since 1904 scholars of the stature of Columbia historian James Harvey Robinson determined that using primary sources as fundamental parts of the curriculum would help undergraduates learn: "When we get at the sources themselves we no longer merely read and memorize; we begin to consider what may be safely inferred from the statements before us and so develop the all important faculty of criticism. We are not simply accumulating facts but are attempting to determine their true nature and meaning."<sup>10</sup> Certainly at my institution, among others, the university provost considers this engagement with primary sources helping students better prepare for the learning demands of a four-year institution, as a much more important aspect of what we do than drawing "oohs" and "aahs" from students. That the provost and

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<sup>6</sup> Sessions at SAA annual meetings that highlighted AHC work with undergraduates and grades 6-12 included "Developing Primary Resource-Based Educational Programs that WORK!" in 2004, "Archivists Get the Lesson Out: Teaching Teachers About Primary Sources" in 2005, "Archivists and Educators Partner to Design an Innovative Undergraduate Course in Archival Research Methodology" in 2006, "Archivists as Educators: Why Should We Teach?" in 2008.

<sup>7</sup> Michelle Visser, "Special Collections at ARL Libraries and K-12 Outreach: Current Trends," *The Journal of Academic Librarianship*, 32:3 (May 2006), 315.

<sup>8</sup> The main pieces of evidence would be the assessments of use in Judith Panitch's *Special Collections in ARL Libraries: Results of the 1998 Survey Sponsored by the ARL Research Committee* (2001), pp. 99-103, the recommendations made to increase special collection use made by: Robert L. Byrd, Director Duke University Rare Book, Manuscript, and Special Collections Library, "'One Day ... It Will Be Otherwise' Changing the Reputation and Reality of Special Collections," 2001, <http://www.arl.org/special/byrd.html>, made at an ARL conference, and the 2003 "Exposing Hidden Collections" conference and white paper.

<sup>9</sup> The most vocal and consistent advocate for a user-centered revision of archives administration has been Elsie Freeman Finch. See especially, Elsie Freeman, "Buying Quarter Inch Holes: Public Support Through Results," *Midwestern Archivist* 10 (1985): 89-97; Elsie Freeman, "In the Eye of the Beholder: Archives Administration from the User's Point of View," *American Archivist* 47 (Spring 1984): 111-23; "Soap and Education: Archival Training, Public Service, and the Profession—An Essay," *Midwestern Archivist* 16 (1991): 87-94. Terry Cook has criticized this view, most sharply in "Viewing the World Upside Down: Reflections on the Theoretical Underpinnings of Archival Public Programming," *Archivaria* 31 (Winter 1990-91): 123-34. Cook argues that the records, and not the user, should be the center of the archivist's universe.

<sup>10</sup> Paul Halsall, ed., "Why Study History Through Primary Sources," *Internet Medieval Sourcebook*: [Adapted from James Harvey Robinson, "The Historical point of View", in *Readings in European History*, Vol I, (Boston: Ginn, 1904), 1-13 ] <http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/source/robinson-sources.html>

president accepted this priority 30 years ago was somewhat unusual, but has at least something to do with the peculiar history of my repository.<sup>11</sup>

Because using special collections to raise funds for the special collections, the library in general, or for the university as a whole received a great deal of attention in the *Chronicle* article, leading off and closing the essay, it could leave the reader with the notion that archives and special collections are means to the end of raising funds at least as much as to the end of educating students. And anyone who believes such a thing is much more likely, in an economic crisis, to begin looking at archives and special collections as monetary, even more than educational, assets. Indeed I know of at least two libraries selling off portions of their special collections during the current economic downturn, and this is not the first time a recession has sparked such drastic efforts.<sup>12</sup> While I have no qualms about using special collections as a fundraising tool, I urge caution when using such monetary appraisal as a legitimate component of the value proposition of archives, manuscripts, and rare books.

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There is another, more basic, aspect to use as half the value proposition of special collections. More broadly than a continuing professional controversy over extending use of special collections to undergraduates, much less grades 6-12 and the public, is the fact that more professionals, and here I will speak particularly of archivists and manuscript curators,<sup>13</sup> need to embrace the general proposition that use is the end of all archival effort. Too many special collections and archival professionals permit roadblocks to remain against fully implementing a commitment to such service. These roadblocks derive, for the most part, from adherence to traditional method and what I would call “protective thinking”—traditional considerations that place protecting the collections, for any number of reasons, above making them accessible. In my profession there remains a deeply ingrained “cult of the record” that insists that archivists are guardians and servants of the material, not facilitators and servants of our researchers.

The roadblocks that exist are several, and many have existed for decades. Let me limn a few that I believe to be the most important and enduring. There are four: declining to make “hidden

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<sup>11</sup> That history is summarized in Mark Shelstad, “Switching the Vacuum into Reverse: A Case Study of Retrospective Conversion as Collection Management,” *Archival Issues* 23:2 (1998): 135-53; also see the “Brief History of AHC Collection Development To 1988” in *AHC Manuscripts Collecting Policy*, at <http://ahc.uwyo.edu/documents/about/administration/AHC%20Collecting%20Policy%203%20rev%202.pdf>.

<sup>12</sup> One current example is the Western Reserve Historical Society which, while currently under fire for selling some of its museum artifacts, has stated that “Collection assets from all WRHS departments [including the Archives-Library] have also been sold over the years in order to reduce the debt.” See Archives and Archivists discussion list, “Message sent on Facebook from Western Reserve Historical Society,” 10 October 2009, from Amber Forrester. This is not the first time. In 1994 the New York Historical Society achieved great notoriety for selling portions of its collections after redefining its mission; deaccessioning collections is not a sin, but generally accepted ethical guidelines require that the proceeds of any sales be used to preserve existing or acquire new collections, not pay operating expenses—the NYHS did the latter. For a well-balanced treatment of the episode, see Liza Montegomery, “Reinventing The New-York Historical Society,” *Antiques and the Arts Online*, at <http://antiquesandthearts.com/archive/nyhs.htm>

<sup>13</sup> I must say I was rather taken aback to read in a recent ALA journal that even in fall 2009 the broad library profession was still wrestling with its transition “From Gatekeepers to Gate-Openers.” Thank goodness the conclusion of the article was “The library worker as gate-opener, I believe, is the essence of the 21<sup>st</sup>-century library user experience.” Steven J. Bell, “From Gatekeepers to Gate-Openers.” *American Libraries* (August/September) 2009, pp. 50-53.

collections” visible in the most expeditious manner; ineffective digitization practices; fear of born digital material; and fossilized advocacy efforts. As for revealing hidden collections, the main archival effort was launched out of growing statistical evidence even in the early 90s that backlogs of unprocessed collections were preventing researchers from accessing collections.<sup>14</sup> It was this context that led Dennis Meissner and me to receive an NHPRC research grant to study processing techniques across 100 repositories and across several hundred grant projects, and to recommend an approach to processing 20<sup>th</sup>-century collections that, while not new in its parts, has proved revolutionary in its whole. The research resulted in an article titled “More Product, Less Process: Revamping Traditional Archival Processing,”<sup>15</sup> now generally referred to in the archival profession as MPLP or “minimal” processing. Please note that this approach is compatible with, though much more detailed than, the “preliminary record” recommended by the ARL “Hidden Collections” white paper in 2003.<sup>16</sup>

A recent survey of members of the Archives and Archivists discussion list,<sup>17</sup> along with papers delivered and comments made at some of the roughly one dozen Society of American Archivists sessions focused on MPLP make it blazingly clear that while many in the archive profession have accepted the premise and application of the article, to eliminate many traditional processing steps in order to better serve our users, a significant minority is not simply resistant but in outright revolt. Opponents are “appalled,” have called application of minimal processing “criminal,” and even told me that it would be the downfall of the archival profession. The objections are legion. Some archivists remain wedded to item-level cataloging, some believe that minimal processing will make archivists dumb and lazy and easily replaceable by students, many assert that users will reject minimal processing, others insist that we must review our collections at the item level to identify federally classified documents, Federal Educational Rights and Privacy Act documents, Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act items, and/or items that someone might consider “private” or “embarrassing.”

Let me address the two most important objections. Would such “shortcuts” serve our users? When we ask our users they tell us yes in no uncertain terms.<sup>18</sup> Second, archivists must, of course, follow the law. What they must not do, though, is insist on item-processing every

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<sup>14</sup> As Ann D. Gordon, *Using the Nation's Documentary Heritage: The Report of the Historical Documents Study* (Washington, DC: 1992), p. 46, discovered, “about 30 percent of respondents had been barred from collections because repository staff had not yet described or arranged the records.” See also Karen Dawley Paul, ed., *The Documentation of Congress* (Washington, 1992) *Documentation of Congress*, pp. 6, 143, where a survey respondent complains “there are too many unprocessed collections,” and Bruce W. Dearstyne, “What is the Use of Archives? A Challenge for the Profession,” *American Archivist* 50:1 (Winter 87), 82, who cites laments about unprocessed collections found in the state assessment reports of California, Kentucky, North Carolina, and New York.

<sup>15</sup> Mark A. Greene and Dennis Meissner, “More Product, Less Process: Revamping Traditional Archival Processing,” *American Archivist*, 68:2 (Fall/Winter 2005).  
<http://archivists.metapress.com/content/c741823776k65863/fulltext.pdf>

<sup>16</sup> Barbara M. Jones, “Hidden Collections, Scholarly Barriers: Creating Access To Unprocessed Special Collections Materials In North America’s Research Libraries: A White Paper for the Association of Research Libraries Task Force on Special Collections” (2003) online at <http://www.arl.org/bm~doc/hiddencollwhitepaperjun6.pdf>

<sup>17</sup> The raw data from this survey was shared with me privately by the survey creators, so I don’t feel at liberty to share particular information.

<sup>18</sup> This is based on three surveys: that done of a small but varied sample of users for the MPLP article; a varied survey of 600 scholars, genealogists, K-12 teachers, undergraduates, and graduate students conducted for a 2006 NHPRC grant to the American Heritage Center, an unpublished survey of members of the Archives and Archivists discussion list, conducted in 2009.

collection that might possibly contain an item that is covered by HIPAA, FERPA, or government classification. Common sense, and a level-headed risk analysis, must prevail. As for protecting privacy, it is neither ethical nor possible for us to try to determine what is so “private” that it should be restricted by the archivist regardless of the donor’s wishes. In fact, one of my profession’s few archivist/attorneys has made the point that the more we assert our responsibility for protecting people’s privacy in our collections, the more (not less) we expose our repositories to legal risk should we happen to slip up.<sup>19</sup>

In scanning our collections, we often continue to focus digitization efforts on individual items. In part this is because this is the “way it’s always been done”; in part it is a belief that this is the “right” way to do digitization, letting the great become the enemy of the good; and in part it is because of a lingering fear that if too much material is available on the web, our reading rooms will be empty. The individual metadata we have lavished on our web-accessible photographs have prevented us from tackling our digitization of textual collections except for a few “gems” within our holdings. A recent OCLC report admonished, however, “Stop obsessing about items. Everything that is digitized does not need to be painstakingly described. Archival control distinguishes organic collections from description of distinct books and museum objects. Let’s embrace that collection management strategy as well as the standards and practices of managing collections and hierarchies, not necessarily items.”<sup>20</sup> File level metadata is exactly what repositories as varied as the University of Wisconsin Oshkosh and the Smithsonian’s Archives of American Art are doing to speed provision of digitized material to researchers. Given the demand by our researchers for more and more digitized material, and given the proposition that researcher use is the purpose of all archival effort, we should adopt such a useful and useable shortcut.<sup>21</sup>

Needless to say, an ever increasing amount of archives and manuscript material is being created with computers, and much of that never sees the light of a printer. This material is “born-digital,” and archivists, particularly manuscripts archivists, must grapple enthusiastically and aggressively with such material. Unless we not only actively acquire such material, but also find ways to make it accessible, we do an increasingly great disservice to our users by denying them important primary sources. Recent Society of American Archivists president Richard Pearce Moses, put it this way: “We need the initiative and drive—possibly impetuosity—to dive in and begin working with digital materials. We’re entering risky territory, leaving the comfortable behind. We cannot wait until we have everything figured out....”<sup>22</sup> Fortunately there is a small but growing set of archivists, such as those at Emory working with the Salman Rushdie papers, who are taking up this challenge to ensure that our users have access to born-digital collections. We need more repositories willing to do the same.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Menzi L. Behrnd-Klodt, “The Tort Right of Privacy: What It Means for Archivists...and for Third Parties,” in *Privacy and Confidentiality Perspectives: Archivists and Archivist Records*, ed. Menzi L. Behrnd-Klodt and Peter J. Wosh (Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 2005), 53–60 (particularly 58–60).

<sup>20</sup> Ricky Erway and Jennifer Schaffner, *Shifting Gears: Gearing Up to Get Into the Flow* (OCLC: 2007): 6.

<sup>21</sup> Archives of American Art at <http://www.aaa.si.edu/collectionsonline/>

<sup>22</sup> Richard Pearce Moses, “Janus in Cyberspace: Archives on the Threshold of the Digital Era,” 2006, at <http://www.archivists.org/governance/presidential/pearce-moses.asp>

<sup>23</sup> This project is a collaborative effort, supported by an NEH grant, between Emory, University of Texas-Austin, and University of Maryland. A link to the white paper that has come of this is at <http://www.neh.gov/ODH/Default.aspx?tabid=111&id=37>. There is a larger international working group that has

The traditional exclusive or even popular openings of special collections exhibits, replete with sherry and hors d'oeuvres, is no longer sufficient advocacy for our programs. One ARL special collections librarian writes perceptively that "A greatly escalated sense of the need for promotion is a major new element affecting rare book librarians' attitudes."<sup>24</sup> If serving the educational mission of the university is the special collections' coin of the realm, as it should be, then advocacy must include contacting faculty, particularly new faculty, who might benefit from your collections in devising their curricula. New faculty, I have found, are specially open to ideas for creating course content for courses they have not yet fully formed.<sup>25</sup>

This is one reason for the success of the American Heritage Center's Innovative Teaching Grants, established originally with funds from the Provost's office and now funded by a private endowment. The grants provide funds for university faculty members to develop undergraduate courses built around AHC sources. We have seen creation of classes as varied as "Asia Through American Eyes," "Wyoming Agriculture Rooted in Diversity," "Suns, Moons, Clocks, & Bells: Native Americans and Time," "The History and Theory of the Solar House," and "History of Popular Culture," to name a few. Advocacy must also include ensuring regular and meaningful conversations with the library dean or whoever your supervisor and ultimate resource allocator is. I have heard too many archivists complain that their bosses don't understand or appreciate what they do, and if that is true it is our own faults for not ensuring regular communication and education of our resource allocators.

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To quote another ARL special collections librarian,

As many university libraries struggle with budget cuts, and difficult decisions are made about the retention of programs..., special collections librarians [must] promote the value of their collections and the services they provide. The *value* of a special collections has largely gone unquestioned in the past but now...special collections librarians are...finding that they are required...to justify their existence. One way to do this is to show that special collections are not only used by scholars but have some *value* to the broader university and community.<sup>26</sup>

Of course, archives and special collections are not the only resources in the library that educate students and connect to the community. They are, however, the only *unique* resources that do so. By definition archives and manuscripts collections are unique one from the other; rare books may not be the sole copy of a title, but are by definition one of very few copies, perhaps the only

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been spawned from this initiative, and the Mellon Foundation is funding a follow up report focusing on the attendant issue of computer forensics for born-digital cultural information: <http://mith.umd.edu/mith-receives-mellon-funding-for-computer-forensics-report/>. There is actually quite a bit of attention being given to this whole area, but archivists on the whole tend not to know much about it and are not the driving forces behind the activity. My thanks to Joel Wurl, a program officer at NEH, for this information.

<sup>24</sup> Daniel Traister, "Public Services and Outreach in Rare Book, Manuscript, and Special Collections Libraries," *Library Trends* 52 (Summer 2003), p. 88.

<sup>25</sup> I learned this a long time ago, as reflected in Mark A. Greene, "Using College and University Archives as Instructional Materials: A Case Study and Exhortation," *Midwestern Archivist*, 14:1 (1989), 31-38.

<sup>26</sup> Michelle Visser, "Special Collections at ARL Libraries and K-12 Outreach: Current Trends," *The Journal of Academic Librarianship*, 32:3 (May 2006) 317 (emphasis added).

copy in a region or a nation. The distinction archives and special collections bring to universities and libraries is relevant, however, only if the archives are used broadly as well as intensively—please note that a commitment to use in teaching does not undermine service to traditional scholars—at my repository scholars from all over the world (more than a dozen nations each year) work quite successfully side-by-side with sixth graders.

Certainly there is evidence of such use, in the undergraduate curriculum<sup>27</sup> and even in work with grade school students and their teachers.<sup>28</sup> Just how widely enthusiastic embrace of undergraduates and grade schoolers is, cannot be determined. Nor can the extent of special collections professionals who accept use as the end to which all other activities are the means. There must, however, be rigorous application of minimal processing, properly understood; just as in rare book libraries there must be more willingness to experiment with archival approaches to cataloging groups of related pamphlets.<sup>29</sup> There must be acceptance of the user-driven approach to digitization and born-digital collections. And there must be new forms of vigorous advocacy for the repository's mission and value. Indeed there are yet other ways in which archives, in particular, can demonstrate responsiveness to user needs, from the way in which appraisal is performed<sup>30</sup> to the adoption of Web 2.0 technologies such as those inviting researchers to add information to finding aids.<sup>31</sup>

There is an equally important need in order for special collections to succeed in bringing distinction to their libraries and even their institutions. And that is for the university's resource allocators to accept the increasingly conventional statement that special collections represent what is most unique and compelling about the modern university library. This means a willingness to support special collections programs that promote use and are integral parts of the teaching, research, and learning experiences of their patrons and home institutions. It is time to ask whether library administrators have acted upon this increasingly commonplace way of thinking—that special collections bring distinction to libraries and universities—in the way they

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<sup>27</sup> For use of ARL special collections see Judith Panitch's *Special Collections in ARL Libraries: Results of the 1998 Survey Sponsored by the ARL Research Committee* (2001), pp. 99-100, 102. An informal survey of several Ivy League, Big 10, and other major universities that I conducted in 2002-03 generally revealed a good deal of depth and breadth in working with undergraduates.

<sup>28</sup> According to a 2006 survey of ARL institution, 76% hosted pre-college classes in their special collections, and "52 percent of the special collections responding to the survey actively do outreach to K-12 students and teachers"—"One university won a Kids Count! Award for "outstanding service to youth researchers." Visser, "Special Collections at ARL Libraries and K-12 Outreach," 315, 316.

<sup>29</sup> A colleague at another ARL university archives and special collections department recently noted to me in a private email that the changing nature of libraries, particularly the impact of shelf-ready books, offers a great opportunity for archivists to partner with book catalogers to show them how archival descriptive practices can be of assistance to them. "With fewer and fewer new books to catalog, our catalogers are now turning to those myriad of odd items, like the thousands of pamphlets on the...Library shelves that have never had adequate description to actually make them findable by the research community." Their head of archives and manuscripts processing is collaborating with the Library's head of cataloging "to introduce the idea of organizing these pamphlets into groups and then making an online finding aid for them."

<sup>30</sup> For example, Stephen Yorke, "Great Expectations or None at All: The Role and Significance of Community Expectations in the Appraisal Function," *Archives and Manuscripts* 28:1 (2000), 24-37. In addition there must be an application of MPLP-like approaches to appraisal particularly of large 20<sup>th</sup>-century collections.

<sup>31</sup> Two examples would be Michelle Light and Tom Hyry, "Colophons and Annotations: New Directions for the Finding Aid," *American Archivist* 65 (Fall/Winter 2002), 414-19; Jessica Sedgwick, "Let Me Tell You About my Grandpa: A Content Analysis of User Annotations to Online Archival Collections," SAA Annual Meeting, 2009; slides available at <http://www.archivists.org/conference/austin2009/docs/session104-sedgwick.ppt>.

have allocated shrinking resources during the economic crisis as well as during more bullish times? Universities must ensure, for example, that special collections have adequate digital infrastructure to support both digitization and access to born-digital collections.

So I submit that archives and special collections have more than “some” value to the broader university and community. They have unparalleled value, a value of increasing distinction and utility to their schools, and of increasing connection and collaboration with their communities. It is up to both archivists and curators on the one hand, and library deans and university provosts on the other, to ensure that these unique resources are used by somebody for something, the archivists by extending and promoting the value of primary sources, and the administrators by ensuring adequate resources for what are sources of increasing value.