Working in the Archives

PRACTICAL RESEARCH METHODS FOR RHETORIC AND COMPOSITION

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To those who left their traces for us to find

INVIGORATING HISTORIOGRAPHIC PRACTICES IN RHETORIC AND COMPOSITION STUDIES

Cheryl Glenn and Jessica Enoch

"History" has become "histories," and histories change in response to the dominant values of institutions, cultures, and historiographers (history writers) themselves. *The* history of rhetoric and associated traditional research agendas strived for objectivity and truth, while contemporary historiographers make claims for unqualified objectivity in their reach for the "truth." Most of the scholars in our field now readily admit the impossibility of getting the story exactly right, let alone recovering an objective truth. Most of us realize that our historiographies will be subjective, given in large part to the interestedness of our research stance and our theoretical grounding. After all, each of us wants history and our view of that history to contribute to the positive value of our daily life. When history does not meet this requirement, we historiographers set to work, revisiting the archives, scouting out new ones, rewriting, and often overturning history. Histories of rhetoric and composition are a case in point.

Just a quick glimpse of some of the historical work in our field reveals how this complexity unfolds. In his 1953 dissertation, Albert R. Kitzhaber initiated disciplinary reflection by studying archived textbooks, leading the way for James A. Berlin's examination of textbooks, exams, surveys, and course and professional materials. John C. Brereton found that his research questions concerning the origins of composition studies could best be addressed by magazine articles, scholarly reports, early textbooks, teachers' testimony, student papers, writing curricula, and course instructions—documents that "were part of the common knowledge of composition teachers and administrators" (*Origins* xv).

As the proverbial dust settled on these histories, others began to question and extend the stories these historians told. In "History in the Spaces Left: African American Presence and Narratives of Composition Studies," Jacqueline Jones Royster and Jean C. Williams not only critiqued the ways in which historiographies like Brereton's, Berlin's, and Kitzhaber's "cast a shadow" on the work of African Americans inside composition studies but also expanded our professional consciousness by shedding light on the many ways such figures as Hallie Quinn Brown, Hugh M. Gloser, and Alain Locke contributed to the practice and pedagogy of composition in the university (581). Anne Ruggles Gere's "Kitchen Tables and Rented Rooms: The Extracurriculum of Composition" turned our historical gaze from the traditional classroom to alternative sites of writing and rhetorical instruction. Along with Gere, Royster, and Williams, many other historiographers continue to challenge understandings of what our history is by drawing our attention to people and places outside the traditional composition classroom: Nan Johnson's research has revealed a dazzling array of nineteenth-century parlor rhetorics; David Russell, the pedagogies for writing in academic disciplines other than English; Lucille M. Schultz, writing pedagogies for and practices of young nineteenth-century writers; and Jean Ferguson Carr, Stephen L. Carr, and Schultz, the nineteenth-century literacy textbooks used at home and at school. Such a rich bounty of archival recuperation galvanizes our field as we identify new materials or reread old ones and contextualize those materials in terms of contemporary scholarly conversations.

So far, the positive results of studies like these are at least three. First, of course, is that the results comprise a variety of versions of what the history of rhetoric and composition is and should be, implicitly arguing that there is no one history but instead many histories. Second, such studies stimulate our thinking in terms of which historical moments, people, and places merit our scholarly attention. And, third, these studies reflect the ways historiographic practice shifts in relation to the questions and imperatives of the present moment. Thomas P. Miller and Joseph G. Jones remind us of this: "Our histories are not what they were but neither are we." As motivated actions, whether showcasing traditionally valued people and practices or shedding light on the "ways that underrepresented groups have acquired and exercised the arts of rhetoric to garner historical agency," the historiographies resulting from all of these archival studies demonstrate just how rhetoric and composition history, once compiled and written, falls apart, only to be recompiled and rewritten, regularly and purposefully (Miller and Jones 436).

In this essay, we examine the historiographic trajectory of rhetoric and composition studies by interrogating the most basic elements of traditional archival practice and historiography. Our goal is to reflect on what we do in the archive and to suggest ways that we might broaden the scope of historiographic methods

by identifying new places to look, new questions to ask, and new issues to consider. We pose this challenge to traditional historiographic research methods by drawing from our own and other scholars' experiences in conducting extensive archival research, much of which troubles histories of rhetoric and composition. As Cheryl researched and wrote *Rhetoric Retold* and *Unspoken*, she worked at the Newberry Library in Chicago; the Houghton Library, Cambridge, Massachusetts; the National Library of Scotland and the University of Edinburgh Library, Edinburgh, Scotland; and the Center for Southwest Studies, Albuquerque, New Mexico. To support her work in *Refiguring Rhetorical Education*, Jess researched at the Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.; the Cumberland County History Society, Carlisle, Pennsylvania; the American Antiquarian Society, Worcester, Massachusetts; and the Webb County Heritage Foundation, Laredo, Texas. Naturally, many of our assertions here arise from our experiences, our successes, our many false starts, and our innumerable failures. Nonetheless, we hope that our argument reveals how the interrogation of various features of archival research and historiographic method can create opportunities for researchers to continue to enrich contemporary understandings of researching and writing histories of our field.

The Search for Archival Materials

The formulation of the project and concomitant research agenda is most often the first step in historiography and archival research. Rarely do researchers identify an archive and hope to find a research project in it. Instead, they begin with a broad research question and then read widely and deeply until they begin to identify an outline of significance or basis of investigation for the project at hand. Once researchers have a handle on the topic, they consider the kind of archival documents that would support, extend, further, and energize the project.

From their initial sense of a topic, researchers extract questions crucial to the research plan: What materials should they now look for? What kinds of primary and archival documents will help them to answer their research question? To answer these questions, researchers must conduct a good deal of detective work: combing libraries large and small, studying catalogs, and tracing collections—all with the singular "purpose" of identifying specific kinds of archival documents, manuscripts, and personal papers.

Literary scholars traditionally search out the papers or manuscripts of an author or those financial, political, or social papers that might give new light to a literary text. Archival researchers in rhetoric and composition, however, often turn their gaze toward other kinds of documents: "actual student writings, teacher records, unprinted notes, and pedagogical materials, and ephemera that writing courses have always generated but never kept" (Connors 225). If our purpose is to study the history of university-level writing practices, these are the kinds of materials that provide insight into the practices of English 101 and its iterations. As Robert J. Connors writes, the historian's project in rhetoric and composition is "the telling of stories about the tribe that make the tribe real. [. . . W]e are telling the stories of our fathers and mothers, we are legitimating ourselves through legitimating them" (234).

But what if the scholar is curious to know about how women or marginalized groups learned or taught rhetoric and writing? How might this initial archival move *dis*enable the researcher from finding resources that would permit pursuit of this line of inquiry, that would fulfill the research purpose?

Over the course of her research for *Refiguring Rhetorical Education*, Jess asked and answered the preceding question during the process of considering how female teachers participated in the education of African American, Native American, and Chicano/a students. Jess's initial, wide-ranging reading of secondary sources concerning Chicano/a students in particular had stimulated her interest in Mexican education in Texas during the period of the Mexican Revolution (1910–20). Given that this historical moment was marked by shifting national identities, economic growth and disparity, and wartime strife, Jess deduced that educational practices must have also gained new shape during this period of change. When she began her search for what Connors identifies as field-specific archival materials (textbooks, student writing, teacher notes, and pedagogical materials), she came up with nothing. Her search seemed only to reify what Guadalupe San Miguel Jr. calls the "myth of Mexican indifference toward public education"—a myth that promotes the idea that "Mexican Americans have not really cared for education or else they have failed to appreciate its importance and benefit to their community in particular and to the society at large" (xvi).

Determined to challenge this myth, Jess returned to secondary materials again, this time purposefully reading *beyond* the myth of indifference to consider how other kinds of materials might reflect educational initiatives inside the Mexican community. Finally, she came across a 1974 article by scholar José Limón called "*El Primer Congreso Mexicanista de 1911* [The first Mexican Congress of 1911]: A Precursor to Contemporary Chicanismo." In it, Limón discusses *La Crónica* [The Chronicle], a Spanish-language newspaper, based in Laredo, Texas, that was owned and operated by the Idar family. Limón writes that the Idars—one of whom being Jovita Idar, a local Laredo teacher—used *La Crónica* to wage a campaign of "journalistic resistance" and focused on a number of local issues, one of the most prominent being the discrimination of Mexican students in Texas public schools (86).

Jess immediately looked for *La Crónica* and found that it was available on microfilm and through interlibrary loan—but in Spanish, of course. In order

to translate these materials, Jess spent hour after hour working with graduate students in the Spanish department, discovering—in the process—a wealth of information concerning Mexican female teachers and students. Three of these teachers, Jovita Idar, Marta Peña, and Leonor Villegas de Magnón, used the press as an alternative site to educate Mexican students, thereby avoiding the discriminatory practices taking place in Texas public schools. Given their impressive pedagogical endeavors, these teachers quickly became the central focus of one of Jess's chapters in *Refiguring Rhetorical Education.*

It is important to note that finding these teachers and their work was contingent on letting go of the disciplinary ideal of the kinds of materials that constitute primary and archival material. If Jess had ended her search after finding no textbooks, pedagogical materials, or student papers, she would never have found *La Crónica*, let alone the teachers who taught through its pages. To imagine the historiographic possibilities attendant in the works of Idar, Peña, and Villegas, Jess had to reconsider the act of identifying historical texts in two ways. First, she had to question the traditional means of rhetorical education and consider what *other* forms teachers might use to teach or students to learn. Second, and more important, she had to rethink the language these specific students and teachers had used. Of course, in retrospect, Jess realizes that Spanish would have been the language of instruction for Idar's, Peña's, and Villegas's readers, but the traditional practice of our field (and our scholars) prompts us to think in terms of English only with regard to the documents that constitute the history of rhetoric and composition.

Simply rethinking the starting point of primary and archival research enriches the histories of rhetoric and composition with possibilities for new perspectives and voices. But alternative source materials and non-English languages are not our only means of doing so. When Cheryl was working at the Newberry Library on *Rhetoric Retold*, her goal was to locate materials that delineated expectations for ancient women and their cultural roles, materials that helped explain the cultural constraints on women's rhetorical participation—a frustrating goal, to be sure. On a lark, she turned her attention to gynecological guides from second-century AD naturalist Galen of Pergamum. Ultimately (and ironically), these guides illuminated for her the one-sex model of humanity that dominated thinking from antiquity through the Renaissance. With his structural models of the male and female reproductive organs, Galen persuaded early thinkers that women were, in essence, imperfect, undeveloped men who lacked one vital and superior characteristic: heat. Furthermore, he provided the gynecological and anatomical drawings to prove his point: "Now just as mankind is the most perfect of all animals, so within mankind the man is more perfect than the woman, and the reason for his perfection is his excess of heat, for heat is Nature's primary instrument" (2:630).

To reach an understanding of ancient perceptions of women and Mexican education, both Cheryl and Jess had to gain, in Richard Enos's words, a greater "awareness of our limited methods of research" and allow for other types of material to enrich scholarly conversations and understandings (67). As Enos argues, scholars in the field often "clin[g] to extant texts as the sole material for scholarly study" and rarely work to "'discover' new evidence" (69). Our work, then, should be to let go of our dependence on traditional texts and research materials and push ourselves to search for new kinds of evidence that might reveal different understandings of how people throughout history have learned and deployed rhetoric and writing. Thus, by questioning the first and most basic act of archival research—identifying potential resources—we can see how all scholars might redirect the field's attention in important ways.

Archival Locations

Of course, it is difficult to tease apart these moments of researching, writing, and reading, because at the same time that scholars are refining the research question and looking for sources, they are mostly likely also considering which archives to visit. After all, the physical space of the archive holds an honored and almost religious place in the scholar's mind. In "My Dream Archive," Christopher Phelps writes that the "archive is a revered place of pilgrimage. It is the Mecca of historians" (1). Phelps goes on to explain that the journey to the archive often "requires temporal and financial sacrifice, but the traveler is sustained by the prospect of discovery and the insight, the perpetual hope that the next box, the next folder, the next file, will contain the elusive find that will afford a window to the past" (1). Connors confirms Phelps's description, defining the upper-case-*A* Archives as "specialized kinds of libraries" containing those "rarest and most valuable of data" that usually exist in "only a single copy" (225). The Archive, then, is the place that contains what most scholars believe to be the "only *real* historical sources" (225; emphasis added).

Locating these Meccas of information is simultaneously easy and difficult. Scholars rarely know what they'll find until they arrive. And despite the fact that just getting there "can be expensive and difficult," scholars still "have to travel to the distant places where [they hope] their quarry lies" (Altick 11). Given these difficulties, many scholars begin their Archival search at rare-book libraries at large research institutions, as many in the field continue to tether their research to such sites as Harvard's archival collection of student writing, the Richard S. Beal Collection of rhetoric and composition documents (divided between the University of New Hampshire and the University of Rhode Island), the Kenneth Burke Papers at the Pennsylvania State University, and the John A. Nietz Old Schoolbook Collection at the University of Pittsburgh. These Archives, and many

others, have enabled scholars working on a wide variety of historiographic projects to gather all sorts of archival materials and then rewrite the history of rhetoric and composition.

Not all archival research in rhetoric and composition begins—or ends—on a university campus or at a prestigious research library, however. With increasing regularity, many researchers in rhetoric and composition have looked beyond Connors's Archive to consider what other, lower-case-*a* archives might hold, archives that don't immediately promise insights into the practices or histories of our field. These *a* archives can range from small, local archives run by community members such as the Cumberland County Historical Society and the Webb County Heritage Foundation—archives Jess visited during her research process—to boxes of materials found in someone's office, garage, or even in a relative's attic. Wendy Sharer, for instance, opens *Vote and Voice: Women's Organizations and Political Literacy, 1915–1930* by describing how her project came into being: with the discovery of political materials in her grandmother's attic. Here, Sharer found material evidence of her grandmother's involvement in a women's club, the Y-Dames of Bethlehem, Pennsylvania. This archive was full of "records of meetings and collaborative projects that were devoted to, among other things, reforming internal affairs, studying political history, and advancing career opportunities for women" (*Vote* 2). Such a finding made Sharer realize that her "understanding of 'citizenship' and 'politics' was severely limited and, as a result, so was [her] knowledge of women's discursive practices of civic and political engagement" (3). This realization, of course, led to more archival research, more writing, and the publication of *Vote and Voice*.

Charlotte Hogg's discovery of her grandmother's unpublished writings set in motion the intellectual project on women's literacy practices that was to become *From the Garden Club: Rural Women Writing Community*. In her examination, Hogg studies "Early Paxton," a leather-bound collection of remembrances of pre-1925 Paxton, Nebraska, written by local women. One of the most prolific and talented in the group was Hogg's grandmother: "While most women who contributed to the book wrote less than ten pages . . . , my grandma wrote forty-four pages" (20). Not surprisingly, "Early Paxton" was not archived in a great research library on a university campus; it was shelved at the local library, which, years ago, Hogg's grandmother urged her eleven-year-old granddaughter to visit upon moving to Paxton. Hogg reflects,

> Shortly after my family moved to Paxton, I was restless and sulky, and my grandma encouraged me to go to the library. I borrowed her key (she was president of the library board at the time) and walked two blocks to the library, where my grandma and other women from town had contributed to "Early Paxton." I opened the book to see my grandma's pages and to see

> if I recognized any other contributors. Grandma's neighbor, Elsie Lenore Holmstedt Windels, had also written a piece for this volume of remembrances. [. . .] Even at the age of eleven, I sensed how important a sense of place was to those who lived there. [. . .] That was the first time I realized that there was more to the people in Paxton than I would have guessed. And I made this discovery through the [unpublished] writings of older women in town. (28–29)

Years later, Hogg would return to this unpublished book manuscript to read it through the lens of rhetoric and composition studies. In addition to tapping "Early Paxton," she fortified her study by examining newspaper clippings, short essays, cards, letters, funeral programs, and notes that her grandmother had saved over the years in her roles as mother, grandmother, library president, Methodist-church historian, and Paxton correspondent of the *Keith County News*.

Through her research, Hogg did not visit Harvard's or Yale's archival holdings but instead found her own fascinating and important archive in the small town of Paxton. Her work and Sharer's, as well as the work of many others, compel us to look beyond the traditional university library as the only worthy Archive and consider other sites as viable for archival work.

When researchers identify nontraditional archives, they are presented with new and fascinating archival questions: Why should we see this collection of materials as an archive? What should happen to this archive and its materials? How do we recognize and respect this archive as a site not just to do research but as a site with other kinds of local, community, or familial investments? By widening the scope of the sites for our historical research, we necessarily confront new questions about and new possibilities for archival recovery, archival methods, and historiographic intervention. For when one shifts the site of analysis, other research features such as the figures, practices, and insights recovered will also shift accordingly. Thus, even when we don't have the good fortune to find archives in our relatives' attics or bureaus, there are smaller, local archives that interpellate us, calling us to value their holdings and reflect on the purpose that archive might serve. These smaller collections or serendipitous discoveries also expand our notions of what counts as a primary resource and especially of what counts as a contribution to the histories, theories, and practices of rhetoric and composition.

Agents in the Archive

As we work to identify materials and locate archives, we must also acknowledge the people who make this kind of recovery possible. So far in this essay, we have defined researchers like ourselves—scholars in rhetoric and composition—as the primary agents in the research project: We pose the research question, identify a destination archive, travel to it, and then activate the materials we locate there.

In the following section, we focus attention on the work that we do as researchers and the reflections we should make as we take up our work. In this section, we highlight the importance of the *other* agents in the archive and offer suggestions as to how we might create stronger "archival relationships" that would make archival recovery more effective, more visible, and more accessible.

Other Researchers

First among the group of other agents are the scholars in the field of rhetoric and composition whose work and collegiality enable their fellow researchers to build on their findings and ask different historiographic questions. In "Archivists: Rethinking Our Archive," Brereton writes that "historians depend on the work of their forebears, on the collecting that forms libraries and repositories great and small and on the interpretations and narratives that shape consciousnesses" (575). Where would we be if Kitzhaber had not created that extensive bibliography? How would we know where to go if Brereton himself had not mentioned the specific archives he tapped in order to compose his groundbreaking *Origins of Composition Studies*? Thus, it is the work of our forebears and our contemporaries that provides researchers with guideposts for locating materials, inspiration for working in long-established and more informal archives, and ideas for how best to employ archived materials for our own purposes.

Although it is true that we share archival information in the acknowledgments and bibliographies of our texts, scholars might also work on other ways to improve our collaboration about research methods and archival findings. In "Dialoging with *Rhetorica*," Jane Donawerth and Lisa Zimmerelli stress the importance of scholars networking with one another about the potential of an archive. For Donawerth, "networking" is the "shortest route to discovery": "Whenever I meet a feminist scholar, I ask her whether she has come across any pre-1900 women's writing on communication. Eleanor Kerkham remembered Sei Shonagon's *Pillow Book*, and there I found sections on letter writing, conversation, and preaching" (6). Donawerth's anecdote exemplifies the rich serendipity of off-the-cuff conversations that deliver the initial inspiration of a research project.

Casual revelations can be exciting, to be sure, but systematic and public networking would be even more productive for established researchers and graduate students alike. To that end, we might formalize collaboration about archival research, starting with the membership of the Special Interest Groups on Archival Work at the Conference on College Composition and Communication and ending, perhaps, with a collaborative archival database. This database could be either a specialized print or online publication in which scholars report on the archives they have visited and the work they have conducted there. Such a publication or site could be modeled on the Bedford Bibliographies, but instead of briefly annotating new scholarship, the archival bibliography could offer readers summaries of sources researchers have located in various archives and links to the Web sites of the archives themselves. This kind of database would not only enable new scholars in the field to see the range and variety of our archival work, but it would also help them to see how and where historiographic recovery gets done.

Archivist Agents

In addition to creating stronger networks in the field between researcher-agents inside rhetoric and composition, it is also important to acknowledge the archivists as vital agents in the archive. They are the ones who catalog the materials that we locate; they are the ones who decide what to preserve and how to catalog it, thereby controlling the materials we can access and the processes we take to get to them. And they are the ones who see the archive collections purposefully, as a whole, while we, too often, limit our vision to the small part of the archive we intend to use. As Sharer writes in "Disintegrating Bodies of Knowledge," it is important that scholars of rhetoric and composition not only be knowledgeable in the methods and methodologies of historical scholarship in our field but also in the work of the archivist. Sharer explains, "We cannot afford to ignore the various materials processes—acquisition, appraisal, collection management, description, indexing, preservation, oxidation, and deaccession—that affect the corpus of records on which we may be able to construct diverse and subversive narratives to challenge previous, exclusionary historical accounts of rhetoric" (124).

Sharer calls on scholars to gain a sense of the archivists' work and to establish lines of communication with them about the kinds of primary and archival materials valuable to our field. One excellent example of such a practice is the collaboration between rhetoric and composition scholars Cinthia Gannett, Kate Tirabassi, Amy Zenger, and Brereton with archivist Elizabeth Slomba. This team worked together to create the Archives on the History of Writing and Writing Instruction at the University of New Hampshire—an archival project that became "enormously valuable" for all parties involved (115). Through the process of building the archive, the four scholars in rhetoric and composition "learned a great deal about how archives are constructed and participated directly in the composition and collection of the archive itself," while Slomba "came to value a variety of artifacts related to writing pedagogy and writing program administration" (115). Of course, Gannett, Tirabassi, Zenger, Brereton, and Slomba are not the only ones who will reap the benefits of this program. This archive will enable the writing community at UNH in particular and the field more generally to gain a deep and detailed picture of writing in a specific university setting. Such collaborations can serve as models for how researchers in rhetoric and composition might work with archivists not only to preserve the important and valued

documents in our field but also to widen the possibilities for archival investigation. If more scholars and archivists follow the lead of those who composed the UNH archive, we would be able to gain a much fuller sense of how writing has been taught across time and institutions (see also "Invisible Hands: Recognizing Archivists' Work to Make Records Accessible" by Sammie L. Morris and Shirley K Rose in part 2 of the current volume).

Archival Reflections

In this section, we examine what it means to see ourselves as "sources of data" that are important to the research process (Connors 227). To be sure, our interestedness and theoretical grounding mean much to the archival project in particular and the project of writing history more generally. We acknowledge that histories are always partial and always interested—*partial* in the sense that it remains incomplete with respect to the reality they presume to depict and *interested* in the sense that it is an interpretive rendering of evidence (Howard). Archival acts of reading are tethered to and in the researcher's own perceptions and prejudices as well as the theoretical frame used to approach the work. As we make these considerations about our interestedness and our theoretical grounding, though, we also explore how these two ideas prompt us to acknowledge other important agents in the act of archival recovery besides the researcher and the archivist.

Interestedness

In the field of rhetoric and composition, it has become almost commonplace for researchers to devote space in their manuscripts to revealing their standpoint and interestedness in relation to their project. Taking responsibility for how and why we might read and write as we do extends far beyond the printed page in which scholars acknowledge their positionality. This understanding of one's position inside of and approach to the final text must accompany each scholar from the initial stages of archival inquiry through the completion of the writing, steadily interanimating the multiple acts that constitute the writing process. Such statements also help the reader understand where the researcher thinks he or she stands in terms of the project and the ways that interestedness informs both the researcher's overarching research agenda and the final text.

Often, it is one's positionality that creates a fruitful, research-launching dissonance. At the outset of our historiographic projects, both of us felt dissonance in our intellectual lives, with our field of study, with received-at-the-time history. Instead of contributing a positive value to our daily life, traditional histories of rhetoric and composition offered shortcomings—shortcomings about women rhetors (Cheryl) and women teachers (Jess). As we entered the archive to engage in the act of re-reading, then, we acknowledged our interestedness and re-read documents in ways that enabled us to listen to texts in new ways. Naturally, any stance inevitably leads to our accentuating some materials and passing over others; we cannot tell everything and move in every direction. What is important is that we do our best to try to uncover the ways our positionality operates and to consider, throughout the historiographic process, how this stance channels us to write one kind of history and directs us away from other possibilities.

Theoretical Grounding

Together, with many other scholars, we have worked to "break up and dissolve those parts" of the past that conflicted with our contemporary ideologies, consciously reading the primary materials we accessed in the archive through a theoretical framework (Nietzsche 75). As we engaged in this process, we soon realized that this relationship between archival reading and theoretical grounding creates a generative tension that opens up possibilities for what we see, value, and then leverage.

Thus, when we began our respective research projects, we found that we needed to relinquish the conceptual apparatus that produced a male-only tradition of rhetoric (Cheryl) and a specific definition of rhetorical education (Jess). Not surprisingly, feminist theory enabled us (and many others) to resist traditional histories and historiographic practices at the same time that we were creating new kinds of historical inquiry and archival reading practices. Cheryl's initial, graduate-student work on Aspasia (seven pages of historical description) moved forward only after she used feminism as a way to broaden her definition of rhetoric and its practice (to include the private sphere) and her requirements for being a rhetor (to include figures whose contributions appear only in secondary sources, like Socrates)—small theoretical adjustments with rich payoffs. Jess also made use of feminist theory's calling into question overarching disciplinary narratives by critically examining the definition and history of rhetorical education. She found that when composing histories of rhetorical education, scholars often looked for moments when students learned about canonical rhetorical theorists and their respective rhetorical principles and theories. Building from feminist theory, Jess saw that if she shifted the definition of rhetorical education to the pedagogical practices that enable students to participate in cultural and civic conversations, the historical lens allowed for a much-wider range of archival texts to read and people to study.

For the two of us, feminist theory made it possible to adopt different kinds of reading practices in the archives. Although every scholar will not and should not use feminist theory as a primary theoretical impulse, it is vital to note the ways in which any theoretical frame we choose—like our positionality—both enhances and limits our work. For example, Carol Mattingly warns in "Telling

Evidence" that the feminist perspective scholars bring to the archives can lead them to focus on only certain kinds of historical women, overlooking the rhetorical work of women who now seem socially conservative (103). As a way to address Mattingly's concern, scholars of every theoretical stripe must continually place their archival reading in conversation with their theoretical disposition, forging a reciprocal process that permits theory to speak to archival finds and archival findings to push against, open up, question, extend, constrict, or even disregard the theoretical frame altogether. In other words, the reading and the theory should inform each other.

More Agents in the Archive

Finally, in addition to reflecting one's positionality in terms of the project as well as one's theoretical approach, we must consciously acknowledge those who, beyond the researcher and archivist, might be affected by our scholarly conversation. When Royster sets out her afrafeminist methodological approach in *Traces of a Stream*, she explains that her approach should prompt a paradigm shift in the ways in which scholars conceive of both their subjects and their audiences. According to Royster, scholars should develop more discerning understandings of "*who* the primary and secondary audiences are and *who*, even, the *agents* of research and scholarship include" (*Traces* 274). In other words, researchers must keep in mind the members of the community they are writing about: "Whatever the knowledge accrued, it [sh]ould be both presented and represented with this community, and at least its potential for participation and response, in mind" (274). To enact such a methodological approach towards both subjects and audiences, researchers must take up "four sites of critical regard: careful analysis, acknowledgement to passionate attachments, attention to ethical action, and commitment to social responsibility" (279).

Royster is not alone in this perception. Researchers using various methodologies are expected to and should strive to account for how their own positionalities and ways of asking, seeing, interpreting, speaking, and writing might affect their research subjects and their communities. Increasingly, rhetoric and composition scholars like Royster are identifying agencies and audiences and then "operating ethnographically" as a means to tell their stories (Royster, *Traces* 282). When Cheryl, for instance, embarked on the research that would become *Unspoken: A Rhetoric of Silence*, she spent several weeks working in the Center for Southwest Research, an archive located in Zimmerman Library, on the University of New Mexico campus. Her purpose was to uncover materials that illuminated the widely touted figure of the "silent Indian." Cheryl soon discovered that in order to make sense of the archival materials and sociolinguistic research, she needed to speak with Native people herself, asking for their comments on the materials she had uncovered. During a series of interviews and meetings, Cheryl realized that all the Native people knew about the stereotype and welcomed the opportunity to get the story straight—to speak for themselves (never for *all* Native people) on tape, in person, over the telephone, or through e-mail. And when Cheryl shared her word-for-word transcripts with them, they sometimes improved it, talking to researchers and research, speaking for themselves.

This kind of communication with and consideration of communities about whom we might research is vitally important to historiographic writing. As Royster explains, "the goal is better practices so that we can exchange perspectives, negotiate meaning, and create understanding with the intent of being in a good position to cooperate," benefit, and understand the people who are "*subject matter* but not *subjects*" ("When the First Voice" 38, 32; emphasis added).

Even with this goal in mind, the dialogic ethnography that Cheryl undertook (and many other researchers in our field continue to employ) remains first and foremost a genre involving the art of interpretation. It is not an exact science and carries with it many of the same tensions of historiography: the task of connecting the "real" and the discourse. Therefore, even the most collaborative and dialogic ethnography or archival inquiry, even the most ethically admirable, is an intervention into a world that has been lived and narrated by the person who has experienced it and then is once again recorded, interpreted, and circulated by the researcher. In other words, historiographers, like ethnographers, concentrate on connecting the experiences of *someone* to the representation of those experiences by *someone else*. Thus, the issue is not so much *why* we approach various groups of people or archival collections but *how* we work to understand and honor their perspective, their experience. The *goal* of accurate interpretation is never enough. When we engage in research, we need to know what our self-interest is, how that interest might enrich our disciplinary field as it affects others (perhaps even bridging the gap between academia and other communities), and resolve to participate in a reciprocal cross-boundary exchange, in which we talk *with* and listen *to* Others, whether they are speaking to us in person or via archival materials.

Invigorating Our Histories through Archival Reflection

As we hope we have demonstrated, it is essential that we reflect critically on the work we do in the archive and how we represent that work in our historiographies. Each new generation (and half generation) of rhetoric and composition scholars from Kitzhaber and Berlin to Gere and Johnson extends our understanding of archival recovery by producing a version of history that in turn prompts new questions and concerns about the historiographic process and product.

Our analysis here aims to help scholars continue to consider how we might open up even more possibilities for archival recovery. A concerted attention to choices of archival documents and locations should enable us to enrich our sense of the kind of "texts" that can contribute to our historical understandings as well as the places where these "texts" might be found. A greater consciousness of the agents in the archive should prompt us to initiate better networks among scholars and to collaborate with archivists as a means to broaden our historiographic vision and deepen our knowledge of what an archive is and can be. And, finally, a consistent reflection on who we are as researchers should call us to think more critically about our interestedness in our research agendas, our choice of theoretical frames, and our attention to and regard for the *other* agents in the archive—our historical subjects. Thus, this analysis of our archival work has indeed brought into focus many important issues and concerns.

We conclude here with one final point. As we highlight the importance of the theoretical lens we use to complement our research process, we do not mean to say that "anything goes" in terms of reading primary and archival documents and writing our histories. Although no single historiography can be the "correct" one, although new archives and archival materials are recovered every year by every generation of scholars, all responsible archival research and the resulting historiography must be based on facts, research, and primary materials. Even as we work on that axis we refer to as "history," an axis pitted by the skeptical probings of postmodern and poststructural critiques, we continue to place real value in historical knowledge, in understanding research methods, in reading promiscuously, in contextualizing our research; in short, in doing our homework. Linda Ferreira-Buckley admonishes us to do just that: "Years ago, our histories were undertheorized; today I fear they are underresearched" (28).

As we hope our discussion indicates, rhetoric and composition scholars can continue to probe our research practices and articulate our histories. After all, historiographers want to make truth claims. We care whether a given account is genuinely credible and probable, because what is ultimately at stake is not only constructing a "usable past" that speaks to present concerns but also treating that past ethically while getting it right (as far as doing so is possible). In the process, rhetoric and composition scholars might well rediscover some treasures among the written, visual, or material artifacts that our subjects have left behind. More important, though, if we consciously and carefully activate the materials in the archives, we might discover ways in which to address the present scholarly moment meaningfully and announce the near future insightfully.

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ARCHIVAL SURVIVAL:
NAVIGATING HISTORICAL RESEARCH

Lynée Lewis Gaillet

> Because history is told by the victors. Everything else falls away. With pharaohs, they chipped out the names of those who had come before and destroyed their temples and statues. It was every ruler's greatest fear, because they knew if there was nothing to remind people they had lived, they would be forgotten. Not only forgotten, erased. . . . When we have truth, we have a chance at understanding. Through understanding, we can reach freedom. When the truth is hidden, we are all wounded.
>
> —*Tucker Malarkey,* Resurrection

Tucker Malarkey's words from the novel *Resurrection* set the stage for this chapter. Historians of rhetorical practices examine archives in an effort to seek nuanced, complicated tales—ones moored to their own times and cultural exigencies. Our adoption of recovery and revision methodologies often leads us to reexamine traditional "truths"; this important work depends on a plurality of research methods and the willingness of the researcher to carefully (re)consider venues and genres for disseminating our work. Kathleen A. Welsch tells us that

> historians in rhetoric and composition are more than storytellers who invite listeners to sit at separate fires to learn separate tales of the past. They are also teachers. It is the historian's responsibility to teach us a variety of ways to read the past, to engage in historical debate, to position narratives in relation to each other so as to gain critical perspective, to draw conclusions on and consider implications of opposing historical projects, and to create constructive tension that moves us forward in our inquiry. (122)

But how do we prepare ourselves to be not only researchers but also effective, scholarly storytellers? As researchers and teachers of the history of rhetoric and composition, the projects we undertake, assign, and direct (including theses and dissertations) adopt a range of methodologies—most of which are not empirical in nature. We must acknowledge that mastering qualitative research methodologies and methods is a messier task (with far fewer definitive resources) than acquiring quantitative research skills. However, in trying to understand historical/archival research methods and methodologies—and in trying to collate published scholarship with my own experiences and research practices—I've come to realize how little codified information on archival research that we, as a profession, offer new scholars. We don't have many treatises addressing the how-to of archival research, and, as a result, many of us visit archives initially equipped with little training in procedures for investigating primary works and few tools for analyzing what we might find in those repositories. In an effort to bridge this gap, in 2007 I designed a new graduate-level research methodologies course for my institution. In preparation, I begged my friends and colleagues who teach history of rhetoric courses from across the country to share their teaching theories and assignments with me; I reviewed all the recent literature I could find addressing pedagogy and research methodologies in rhetoric/composition (plenty of scholarship based on the investigation of primary documents surfaced but disappointingly little advice specifically delineating steps for conducting archival research within rhet/comp studies); and I searched frantically for a current, full-length textbook addressing rhet/comp research methods—none to be had. In this chapter, then, I share information concerning archival research that I gleaned from designing and teaching the revised methodologies course and offer a few suggestions for scholars who are interested in visiting the archives.

Archival Research (Re)Defined

Sometimes, archival research involves following a Nancy Drew–like trail of clues that culminates in the rare, intriguing, "holy grail" find at the conclusion of the search—but not often. I've only had that experience once or twice in my professional life. In 1990, as I was researching educator George Jardine in Glasgow, Scotland, I came upon a decrepit and flimsy box housing 136 letters tied together with a faded red ribbon—letters written by Jardine over the course of his life. These letters held the genus of Jardine's teaching theories and pedagogy. I had found the mother lode—at least in this phase of my search for Jardine artifacts. I've had other "ah-hah!" moments involving archival finds that changed the trajectory of my research, but for the most part, archival research is somewhat tedious, involves following trails that fork, branch, or dissipate and rarely involves holy grail discoveries.

The *Glossary of Library and Internet Terms* defines *archive* as a "repository holding documents or other material, usually those of historical and/or rare value. Also referred to as Special Collections" (Fowler). Most disciplines agree the word *history* involves the study of the past and that the term *archives* includes nonreplaceable, valuable items, but in the field of rhetoric/composition, defining *rhetorical history* while determining what legitimately constitutes *archives* is often complicated. James J. Murphy breaks down the term *rhetorical history* into its constituent parts; he defines *history* as "the reconstruction of important human questions from the recorded answers of the past" (187) and *rhetoric* as the study of means for future discourse" (188). On the other end of the spectrum, Robert Connors romantically tells us that the "[a]rchive is where storage meets dreams, and the result is history" (17). The murkiness of determining and defining historical/archival research within the field is reflected in rhet/comp historians' definitions of key terms. I interpret the term *archives* broadly to include a wide range of artifacts and documents, such as (unpublished and published) letters, diaries and journals, student notes, committee reports, documents and wills, newspaper articles, university calendars/handbooks/catalogs, various editions of manuscripts and print documents (books, pamphlets, essays, etc.), memos, course materials, online sources, audiotapes, videotapes, and even "archeological" fragments and finds.

Thomas P. Miller and Melody Bowdon highlight the difficulty in doing and evaluating historical research when the field's scholars interpret basic terms such as *archive* and *rhetoric* differently: "Methods are a means to an end, and before we can discuss methods or purposes, we need to be clear about what the object of study is" (591). If defining what exactly constitutes the field is unclear, then, of course, discerning a single method of research becomes improbable. Recognizing the shift in the nature of rhetorical study described by Miller and Bowdon, Linda Ferreira-Buckley calls for continued education in traditional methodology: "[F]ar from being incompatible with a progressive politics, [traditional methodology] is in fact the best agent of change" (582). She states that what "is most required to look at [historical] materials and to recover others is scholarly training." In an honest lamentation, she suggests that

> our students—and some of us—are underprepared in the specialized research techniques necessary to revisionist histories. Theoretical sophistication does not obviate the need for practical training. We lack the tools of the historians' trade; familiar with only the most obvious granting agencies, we cannot secure the money needed to carry out research agendas that are both deep and broad. There are exceptions, of course, but they are too few. I urge all progressive historians to master traditional and emerging research methodologies—tools crucial to revising traditional accounts of history. (582)

I agree with Ferreira-Buckley. Regardless of the object of archival study, training in the basic tenets of primary research is necessary for anyone interested in this research method. This chapter, then, offers basic instructions and some guidelines for visiting manuscript libraries and analyzing the materials found there.

Practical Training for the Historian

How do we, as historians and teachers of research skills, answer Ferreira-Buckley's call? What are the methodologies and tools that we ourselves must master and hand down to our students? Much of the published scholarship addressing rhetoric/composition archival research fails to outline the "steps" necessary to follow when researching archives—an omission, in part, giving rise to this collection. In my class, the students and I began wading through journal articles, Web sites, books, and the class text (Kirsch and Sullivan's now-dated 1992 *Methods and Methodology in Composition Research*), seeking concrete methods and clear-cut advice addressing the complexities of conducting historical research. We had specific questions about the guidelines that define both individual and pluralistic research methods. For the most part, we were disappointed in our search for a pedagogical plan—one that blends methodology with method—either overtly intended for historical/archival research or a method that could easily be adapted for this kind of research. Many rhetoric/composition scholars address methodology (in fascinating depth), but method is often project-specific or glossed over. Robert Connor's chapter in *Methods and Methodology* provides a good point of departure, particularly the discussion of what he terms "the three primary parts to traditional historical analysis: external criticism, internal criticism, and synthesis of materials" (25), but as Connors aptly reminds us, "History is not, and never has been, systematic or scientific" (31). James Murphy's "Conducting Research in the History of Rhetoric: An Open Letter to a Future Historian of Rhetoric," in Olson and Taylor's *Publishing in Rhetoric and Composition*, includes a list of strategies or "Pragmatics for the Historian of Rhetoric" (189–94). Embedded in this list is the genus of archival methods for the historiographer. We were getting closer in our search for a codified discussion of tools and steps associated with examining archives and artifacts, but I quickly realized that if I wanted a list of guidelines, steps, and tools for analyzing primary documents, I was going to have to create it for myself. The next two sections enumerate and describe pragmatic tasks and skills archivists need to consider.

Visiting Manuscript Libraries

The following projects and heuristics will help familiarize newcomers with some of the components of historical/archival research. Keep in mind that these prompts are not equal in weight. The first two, for example, are designed as an introduction to archival research. The remainder are designed for researchers who have selected a site or archive to visit. Embedded within the assignments is advice for conducting research, along with typical guidelines and requirements often associated with this research method. I offer these heuristics simply as an introduction to archival research and as an aid for gaining access and funding to visit archival collections. I have formatted the list in the form of assignments.

1. To get a sense of manuscript or primary-document research, visit any collection of primary materials or archives housed nearby. Try to find intriguing documents to peruse, but don't worry if the collection seems a bit far afield of your interests. Research the collection, noting the kinds of documents included, the organization and cataloguing of the materials, how to gain access to the collection, and rules for examining and copying the documents. Unfortunately, many scholars visit archival collections for the first time when they have limited time/resources and have traveled great distances (not always under the best conditions) to reach the research site. A field trip to a local archive will help in anticipating not only the conditions of conducting research but also the problems and concerns that may be difficult to address far away from home and your local support network.

2. Select a site to visit or a collection to examine, and conduct preliminary investigation online relevant to the research topic. Become familiar with the online catalog of archival holdings housed in the facility you wish to visit; in addition to university libraries, check out public libraries, newspapers, and government agencies for information about local events, figures, and news stories from the historical period you're researching. To save time and money (especially if traveling great distances), find as much information as possible online. Catalog and annotate findings.

3. Find possible funding sources to support your research and defray the expense of traveling to manuscript sites. Collect all guidelines, necessary forms, and sample grant applications if available. Look for funding from businesses, academic and government agencies, collection holders (schools, libraries, and individuals who want to make their collections available to scholars), and special-interest groups or foundations interested in specific work (AAUW, unions, county historical societies). Make hard copies or an electronic portfolio of findings.

4. Practice writing different sections of the grant application. Some agencies provide grant-writing counselors. A grant application typically includes a narrative explaining the project and methodology, a justification or need analysis for the research, a literature review, a plan for disseminating the findings (including a target audience for the work), a budget, and your résumé. Follow the guidelines to the letter, including all—but only—the requested materials.

5. Plan an itinerary and budget (required for most grant applications) for visiting an archive outside of your geographical region. Obviously, you will need to find travel options and prices, local accommodations near the investigation site,

and dining choices. Remember to account for transportation (bus, taxi, rail, car rental) from house to site and back again. Other (perhaps unexpected) costs might include technology fees, admissions to special and museum collections—and, in some countries, a pocket full of change for admission to public restrooms! Investigate photocopying limitations and fees, which for many researchers are a significant part of the budget. Some institutions charge as much as a dollar per page; others limit copies to a specific number per day. Some collections do not allow photographing of artifacts, so check what the restrictions, if any, are in force at the collection site.

6. Make a list of and obtain necessary documents. Don't leave home without a reference letter vouching for your institutional affiliation and the validity of the research project from both your department chair and research advisors. These letters can be invaluable in helping you gain admission to libraries and collections (sometimes at a reduced fee), securing temporary library cards and privileges (such as photocopying, parking, and lockers), and finding lodging and access to faculty dining in some instances (a necessary perk when conducting research in isolated, remote, and/or expensive areas). To the actual research site, take a driver's license or other photo identification, school identification, school library cards, passport, and other officially issued documentation. Manuscript librarians are often more willing to help if they understand the project, so be ready to provide a written project description—the narrative information necessary for grant applications—and if you've received a grant, be sure to inform the librarian, letting him or her know that you are "sanctioned."

7. Make a list of equipment needed onsite: laptop, cables, wireless cards, adaptors for electrical current and outlets (plugs), pencils, pens, and paper for those collection sites that don't allow or accommodate electronic notetaking, essential books and research guides (only those unavailable at the site) necessary for understanding the documents you're examining, and a sturdy bag (preferably with compartments for protecting documents).

8. Before visiting any archive, contact the manuscript librarian or curator of the archives to arrange specific times to visit the collection or collections. A collection may be loaned out to another library or researcher, relocated for housekeeping purposes, or stowed somewhere else for safekeeping. I planned to visit an east-coast collection a full year after Hurricane Hugo had threatened the area. Although unaffected by the storm, the library's manuscripts, which had been boxed and stored inland for safekeeping, were still unavailable. The library had taken advantage of the opportunity to remodel. I'm glad I called.

9. Become familiar ahead of time with the rules and regulations of the facility. Check out the institution's Web site for information, if available, or ask the librarian in advance for a copy of the facility's rules of usage. Because documents are often

irreplaceable, manuscript libraries are often quite strict about what is taken into the reading room and the handling of documents. To optimize your visit and to ensure access to documents, plan ahead. There are some general, practical rules for best preserving the documents and avoiding disturbing other researchers:

- Know what items are forbidden: no permanent markers (pens, ballpoints, Sharpies, or highlighters)—only pencils allowed; no food and drink in the reading rooms; no backpacks, computer bags, or coats (to prevent theft and control what is brought into the space); no bulky notebooks or binders, only loose paper or laptops for taking notes; no cell phones or pagers, so that you don't disturb other researchers. Lockers may be available for storing your personal possessions.
- Wash your hands before handling documents. Touch archival materials as little as possible; some libraries require you to wear cotton gloves.
- Don't hold materials while reading. Instead, place materials squarely in the middle of the reading desk so edges don't get crumpled or stained.
- Use provided foam wedges to support documents and to help best position the materials for reading and paperweights, if provided and necessary, for positioning unwieldy documents.

Examining Archival Data

Once scholars have prepared for the physical tasks of traveling to manuscript repositories and handling primary documents, methods of evaluating and reporting discovered data become paramount. Vickie Tolar Collins's "The Speaker Respoken: Material Rhetoric as Feminist Methodology" presents both a method and "a methodology based on the concept of material rhetoric that can help scholars avoid problems of appropriation, anachronism, and decontextualization as we reclaim women's historical texts and support the epistemological worth of women's ordinary experience, particularly as revealed in their narratives" (546) and offers a good template for constructing a general historical/archival research method. Collins's "material method" closely examines primarily published documents and adopts a rhetorical approach to interpretation that is easily generalizable to historiographical practices. Adopting, borrowing, modifying, and expanding Collins's "method" to include a more inclusive definition of archival artifacts and blending her method with the advice and guidelines offered by Connors, Murphy, and many feminist historians, I attempt below to list and define some of the steps often associated with evaluating archival materials. The following tasks and questions (the sequence is not prescribed) concern examining data, not necessarily the initial discovery of archival materials:

1. Determine the research questions. When approaching an archive, what do you think or hope you will find? Remember, you may have to refine, redefine, and sometimes abandon hypotheses along the way, depending on the contents of the archive, the inability to corroborate data, conflicting reports, and the like.

2. Provide a physical description of the document or artifact. Describe the paper, watermarks, binding, print or handwriting, marginalia. Photocopy or transcribe the title page and table of contents as they appear; photograph other artifacts. Keeping in mind that you may not be able to revisit the archive, make notes about contents (preface, chapter titles, afterword, appendixes). Be sure to note any cataloguing information that may be pertinent when referring to or citing an archive, that is, manuscript-collection titles and numbers, other artifacts housed within the same collection, distinguishing marks of anonymous writings such as individual student notes.

3. Categorize the findings. What are the venue and genre of the works you are examining? If the item is not a published, printed, or taped document, what are the options for describing it?

4. Couch both archival materials and your analyses/stories within political, social, economic, educational, religious, or institutional histories of the time. Consult multiple secondary sources, related or competing primary sources, other disciplines or venues, and historical accounts in order to "locate" your materials within contemporary exigencies.

5. Ask yourself how best to corroborate your assumptions and claims. How can you substantiate the story you tell? What other sources or archives might you consult to add credence and validity to your narrative?

6. Locate your subject within contemporary rhetorical artifacts and events, such as publications, conversations, public events, and/or performances. Consult a wide range of both secondary sources and contemporary primary sources. What is the rhetorical significance of your subject/object of study?

7. Ascertain the motives inherent in the materials studied. What is their nature, and who commissioned their creation? Are the materials personal, didactic, written for hire, government sponsored?

8. Carefully analyze the original audience for the artifact, both intended and secondary.

9. Investigate the contemporary reception of the work. If published, what are the production and sales records? If the artifact was intended to promote rhetorical engagement, did it? How? Where? When? Under what circumstances?

10. Research the subsequent reputation of the materials. If the materials were initially influential, when, under what circumstances, and to what degree did that influence wane? Did future generations appropriate the materials in ways

not originally intended? Did these materials spawn other publications, practices, and similar products or theories?

11. Decide how to tell your story. What is your stance? Who is the audience? How will you organize and disseminate the findings?

I've offered very practical advice for visiting manuscript libraries and considering what you find there, but in qualitative research, there remains another important element to consider: the "presence" of the archivist. Determining your role as a researcher and articulating it to readers—essentially learning to become the scholarly storyteller—are shifting, more abstract tasks to master.

It's Personal: The Role of the Researcher

Recovery and revision historiographical theory in rhet/comp argues that the researcher becomes a part of the project—a participant whose *ethos* is evident is his or her research. In qualitative research, the relationship between researcher and subject is often problematic and needs to be addressed. The researcher's interests, prejudices, selection of subject matter, research questions, and biases inform and guide the research, and the researcher should inform readers of these factors up front. Carol Berkenkotter's 1989 proclamation is still valid (and still goes unrecognized by many present-day researchers): "[W]hen we articulate our models of knowing and discuss our differences in good faith, it becomes much easier" to expand traditional notions of quantitative and qualitative research and "to engage in 'multimodal approaches'" and pluralistic research methods. To illustrate, in my research of historical figures and teaching practices (both secular and religious), I bring a humanist interest in mooring figures to their individual cultural times, a historian's interest in texts and archival research, and a rhetoricians' interest in persuasion, rhetorical engagement, and influence. I wish to see neglected or misrepresented figures (both male and female) recovered and, in some cases, their reputations revisited. In that vein, I also wish to see these figures' works made widely available. I want our predecessors viewed culturally, within the framework and exigencies of their times, not subsequent generation's. Finally, I am a "rhetorical activist" in that I want neglected writings included in contemporary histories of the rhetorical tradition. Being honest about my personal goals, research lens, and preconceived research agenda helps me, along with readers, both define the scope of my research and reflect critically on my methodological choices.

I believe storytelling—with a purpose, based on painstaking research, tied to a particular cultural moment, making clear the teller's prejudices—is the real task of the historian, regardless of the negative connotations often associated in academia with storytelling. Although many historians have looked to the past to understand the present, that goal is not universally embraced and has recently fallen out of favor in the wake of charges of "presentism." Connors tells us "In

fact, history is narrative, and every attempt to create a system to give that narrative a predictive meaning is fraught with peril" (31). So if our primary task is not to research the past to see what those events tell us about the future, then with what are we left? Unearthing and interpreting facts, layering stories of rhetorical engagement, bringing to light multiple histories and perspectives that reveal the complexities inherent in humanistic study, weaving facts and research into persuasive narratives. Interesting and exciting work! The researcher becomes a filter and a lens—an integral and recognizable component of archival research.

Omissions and Conclusions

Although I've not covered "management issues" in this chapter, methods for organizing and codifying research findings is a recurring problem for experienced and new scholars alike. Methods of storage, coding, and retrieval that work well for one research project are not necessarily generalizable or appropriate for managing another. Connors explains in his 1992 discussion of "synthesis of archival research" that the "questions involved in *writing* history are stylistic, presentational, small-scale"; yet, these questions, raised so long ago, are still asked—and often go unanswered. These queries, as posed by Connors, include how we should organize data, which quotes do we include or discard, should we present data thematically or chronologically, how much background information should we provide (29). Often the answers to these seemingly "small-scale" issues send us back to the archives or force us to reexamine our original research hypotheses, as Connors himself admits. If the management answers were predictable, prescribed, easy, then we wouldn't need to keep asking the questions. We wouldn't have a need fifteen years later for this collection. With the advent of digital records and research methods, the list of unanswered management questions continues to morph and swell.

Miller and Bowdon remind us that not all archives are easily accessible and that "archival work requires the research skills to locate holdings and the finances to visit them." They complicate the discussion of access by raising issues of Internet research: "The Web offers unprecedented access to archival materials—to those with the requisite technological resources and institutional affiliations, which are not insignificant requirements" (595). As manuscript libraries make their holdings available online, historians must adapt their research methods. Archival retrieval no longer only entails tracking down the location of desired artifacts, applying for travel grants, and spending long days taking copious notes in cold, musty library basements. While many of us who crave the physical search for primary documents bemoan the loss of hands-on examination of artifacts, we realize that historical research is expensive and difficult—especially for beginning scholars or those working at institutions with limited research budgets. However, the move from tangible examination of materials to virtual document handling toys with one of the fundamental truths of historical research: "Search is play." As Connors explains, "archival reading is . . . a kind of directed ramble, something like an August mushroom hunt" (23)—an activity that naturally defies codification. If we agree that historical research constitutes a form of detective work, then how must the search shift when the trail begins, and in many cases ends, online? How does the historian's line of inquiry accommodate online searches? What questions can and can't be answered solely through online research? And perhaps most important, in what ways must we shift our method/methodological processes when researching historical documents/issues online? These questions will surely push to the foreground of historical research as more documents and library holdings become digitally available.

In these pages, I have not addressed legal matters or issues of ethics connected to archival research. I hope other scholars more knowledgeable than I will tackle the legal and moral complexities often associated with investigating manuscript collections. Also, issues of validity and credibility are always a concern for the archivist, particularly when examining unpublished works. Methods of corroboration and procedures for testing reliability need to be codified. Perhaps most important, as Nan Johnson and Barb L'Eplattenier often suggest, we must come to the realization that historical research is exciting, that layered storytelling is interesting, compelling, and engaging. Much work remains to be done, particularly in terms of method, but this collection presents a wide-open door, inviting the next generation of historians/archivists to come on in.

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WorldCat. <http://www.worldcat.org/>. Free database through the Library of Congress <http://www.loc.gov/coll/nucmc/> under "Searching Manuscripts" and then "Searching on OCLC WorldCat."

FINDING AND RESEARCHING PHOTOGRAPHS

Helena Zinkham

Photographs provide a vivid connection between the present and the past that can inspire new interest in old subjects and also improve understanding of diverse peoples, places, and subjects. The special power of this visual language to aid explorations of history was recognized not long after photography was invented. The New-York Historical Society, for example, published a report in 1862 to urge the acquisition of photographs to benefit future scholarship:

> Within a few years there has been given to the world one of the most curious & useful inventions of human genius. Sufficient time has not elapsed to enable us to ascertain its exact influence upon historical inquiries, but we doubt not it will furnish most valuable materials to future Prescotts, Irvings & Bancrofts. . . . If Art had been able to preserve for them the actual reflections, as in a looking glass, of the scenes they describe, what life would animate, what truth would dignify their pages! . . . how many questions it would solve in architecture & costume & history about which hundreds of dull & unsatisfactory books have been written.

Photographs not only illustrate history but also they themselves can be rich primary source materials. In addition to studying the content of images, considering why photographs were created and for whom can shed new light on research topics. In a biography of Sojourner Truth (1797?–1883), historian Nell Irvin Painter devotes an entire chapter to the photographic portraits that Truth commissioned (see fig. 10.) Truth, a well-known public speaker on women's rights and abolition, tapped into the popular craze for *carte de visite* photographs of celebrities. As early as 1863, she sold these calling-card-size portraits by mail and at public appearances. Her signature phrase "I sell the shadow to support the substance" appears below many of the images.

Today, seeing a portrait of Truth while reading about her speeches reinforces the sense of her strong personal presence. Delving deeper into the original context of the images, Painter points out Truth's astute use of a new technology as a source of income. Painter comments on Truth's choice to present "the image of a respectable, middle-class matron" by posing in the well-fashioned clothing she wore for public speaking (187). According to Painter, Truth's portraits did not invite donations based on charity for an ex-slave. Instead, the images insist on Truth's womanhood and refute the idea that anyone deserves slavery. Painter based her analyses on fourteen portraits from seven sittings that she found at libraries and museums as dispersed as the Detroit Public Library, the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor, and the National Portrait Gallery in Washington, D.C.

Overall, photographs are a very new means of communication compared to written words. But so many public and private repositories have accumulated so many photographs that finding images for a specific research project can be a challenge. And, as approachable as photographs might seem at first glance, visual literacy is essential to the researcher's ability to understand and use images effectively.[1] This chapter is organized like a tutorial, and the sections follow the typical sequence of steps for undertaking research with photographs. The first two sections focus on preparation steps by describing strategies for finding sources of photographs and, then, by presenting ways to learn about general picture research techniques. The last two sections introduce techniques for working with whatever photographs have been found and offer exercises for reading photographs and caption images and tips for researching subject matter, creators, dates, archival context, and material culture.

Finding Photograph Sources

Research with photographs is often as complex as it is rewarding: a wide variety of organizations hold photographic collections, including archives, libraries, historical societies, museums, and commercial stock image services. Although growing numbers of historical photographs are available online as digitized images, photographs are still more likely than books and manuscripts to be uncataloged, undercataloged, or represented only in card catalogs and browsing files. In-depth research with photographs requires visiting repositories in person to examine original images and explore the numerous "off-line" collections. Researchers use a variety of tools to track down likely sources of photographs, including printed reference works, general Web searches, subscription databases for visual resources and finding aids, lists of online visual catalogs, and guides to collections. Access tools differ among repositories, ranging from collection-level summary

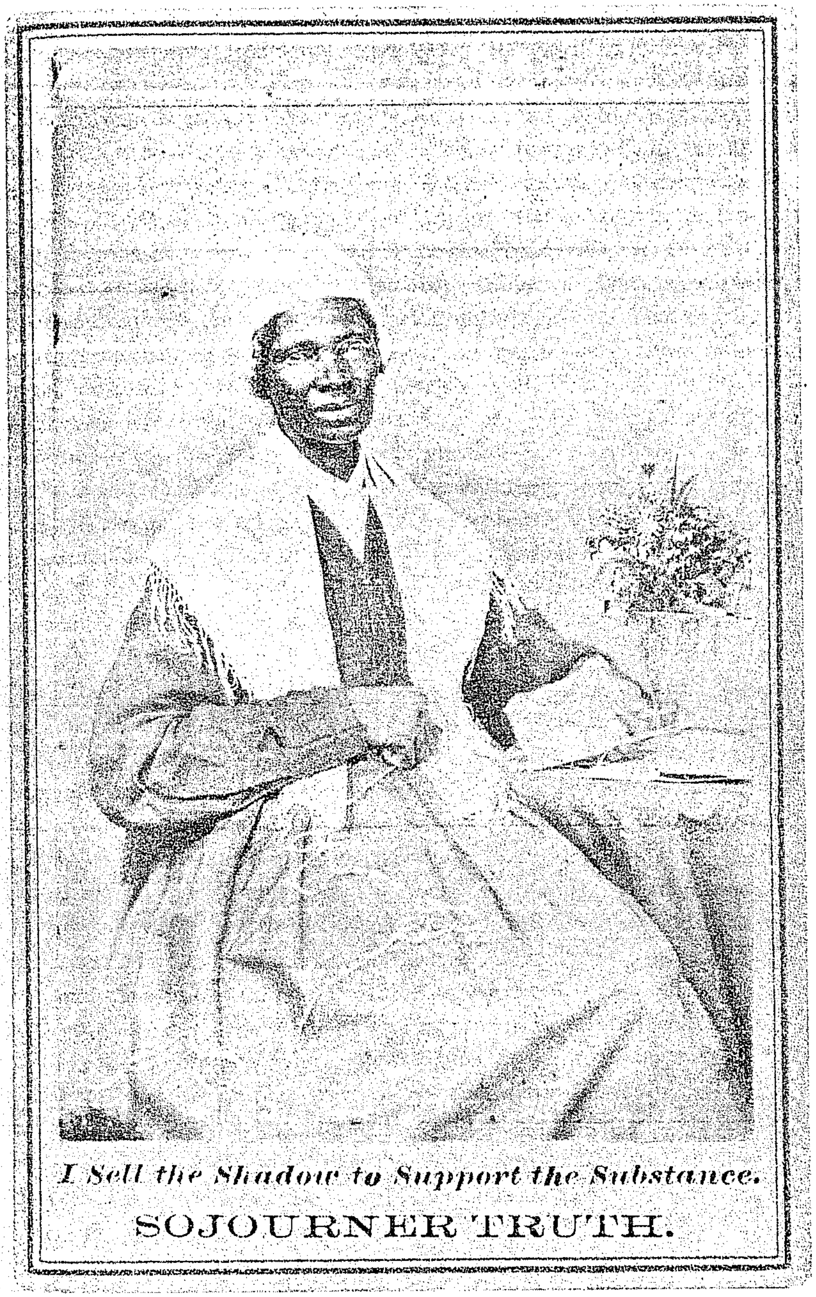

Figure 10. Sojourner Truth. Albumen photo on *carte-de-visite* mount by unidentified photographer, 1864. Courtesy Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division, Gladstone Collection of African American Photographs, LC-DIG-ppmsca-08978.

descriptions supported by general finding aids to detailed, item-level databases with online images. Thus, in-depth research requires casting a wider net to locate sources of enough photographs to constitute a sufficient body of evidence for the subject being explored.

Although interesting pictures can be found through the Web and most contemporary researchers turn there first, any comprehensive search for pictures should also include printed books and magazines. Among the traditional picture reference works that remain valuable are the *A.L.A. Portrait Index*, which contains an estimated 120,000 citations of portraits published in books and periodicals before 1905. Books such as the heavily illustrated *Chronicle of America* offer visual time lines of history and indicate the kinds of pictures available for different eras and their sources. Already published histories of specific research topics are a way to find potential sources of images or to learn about a subject through a visual overview. Checking image credit lines and citations in bibliographies and footnotes can lead to the names of repositories that might have additional images on the same subject. To locate printed visual histories, search in library catalogs or at bookseller sites for the desired topic combined with such phrases as "illustrated history," "views of," "pictorial," "photographs," and "portraits."

General Web searches are a useful strategy for a rapid introduction to archival and published resources that often include photographs of popular subjects. Researchers should use more than one search service, such as Google and Yahoo, and compare the top few pages of results. Researchers should also be wary of depending solely on "image search" tools because many pictures are presented in online exhibits, essays, and blogs without being separately indexed as images. Among the search-result lists, Web sites that tend to cite the sources for the historical images, including Wikipedia, PBS stations, and specialized subject sites, are especially helpful. Searching eBay for pictures of research topics can lead to interesting images, but researchers should be aware that many of the photos that look old are actually uncredited modern reproductions. Such images are risky to use as primary resources because they may have been significantly altered in appearance from the original and may lack crucial caption information such as the original creator names and image dates. Researchers should rely instead on sources that can provide authenticity and context for their images.

Subscription databases available through many research libraries are also worth consulting because they increasingly incorporate photographs and other pictures. Examples include the American National Biography Online (illustrated with many portraits) and HarpWeek (illustrations published in *Harper's Weekly* from 1857 to 1912). At least one new nonprofit subscription service has begun to focus on visual materials. ARTstor "is a digital library of nearly one million images in the areas of art, architecture, the humanities, and social sciences with a set of tools to view, present, and manage images for research and pedagogical purposes" (ARTstor). The AccuNet/AP Multimedia Archive includes more than two million images from the 1800s to the present. The ArchiveGrid from the Online Computer Library Center (OCLC) offers access to collection descriptions from thousands of repositories.

Photographs are among the most heavily used resources in archival repositories. As a result, separate access tools often exist to assist researchers who need images. These special databases and checklists for visual materials can be difficult to locate through general Internet searches because their names vary so widely. Phrases such as *digital images*, *historical photographs*, and *visual resources* are used in numerous combinations with the words *archives*, *catalog*, *collection*, *gallery*, *library*, and *online*. To help researchers get started in finding the specialized catalogs for documentary and historical images, the Library of Congress's Prints and Photographs Division offers a list of about fifty representative online picture catalogs at http://www.loc.gov/rr/print/resource/223_piccat.html.

Collection guides, both online and printed, also provide valuable access routes to pictorial holdings in libraries, archives, and museums. In addition to summarizing each collection at a repository, guides can highlight relationships among collections and provide in-depth indexes. The introductions to these guides also convey valuable information that helps researchers comprehend the collections' strengths and weaknesses. The old directories such as *Picture Sources* and *Picture Researcher's Handbook* that summarize public and commercial sources of pictures can still be useful to build awareness of the kinds of organizations that offer photographs. Researchers new to working with photographic collections can benefit from selecting a guide to review for an archive in their geographic vicinity and then asking the archives for an orientation session with the collections. The dual activities of reading about an archives and visiting in person can help researchers learn how written descriptions of photographs translate into the different types of images available at archives. For ready reference, the Library of Congress's Prints and Photographs Division has compiled an online list of more than sixty guides to visual collections at http://www.loc.gov/rr/print/resource/227_picguides.html.

A search for photographs of the United States Indian School in Carlisle, Pennsylvania, illustrates how picture research benefits from pursuing images through a variety of general Web and deep-Web sources and also printed reference works (see fig. 11). The school's now controversial assimilation program operated from 1879 to 1918. The founder, Richard Henry Pratt, used photographs from the school's earliest years to promote his program. The images could be useful for comparative studies of educational facilities and teaching methods as well as for investigations of cultural interactions. Starting with Google and Yahoo searches for the phrase *Carlisle Indian School*, several common sources surface: a Wikipedia article, photo collections at the Cumberland Historical Society in Carlisle, the Carlisle Indian Industrial School Research Pages site, and *Visualizing a Mission*, the latter of which is an exhibit catalog from an art historical-methods seminar at Dickinson College and includes essays on the major Carlisle photographer John Choate and visual propaganda. The references at these sites to photos at the National Archives and Records Administration, the Smithsonian National Anthropological Archives, and the Library of Congress lead to exploring the deep-Web catalogs at each institution where hundreds more photos are described.

The Cumberland Historical Society offers the most comprehensive array of photographs by a variety of photographers, with extensive indexing of individual student names online and helpful summaries of relevant holdings at the National Archives and Records Administration. The National Anthropological Archives collections can help a researcher compare Carlisle photographer John Choate's

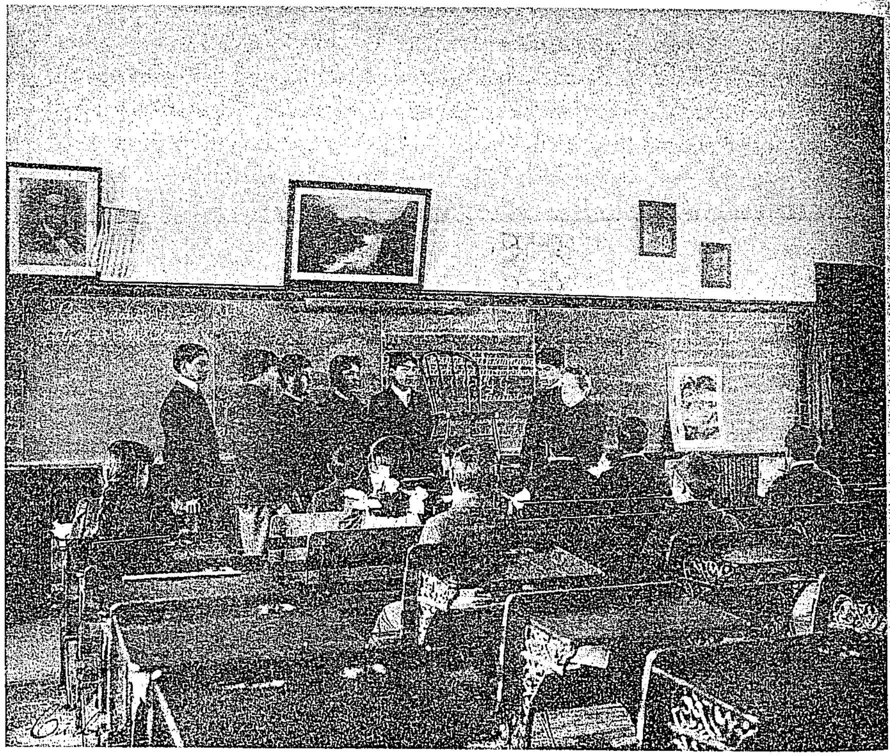

Figure 11. "Conversation Lesson—Subject, the Chair," Carlisle Indian School, Carlisle, Pennsylvania. Cyanotype photo by Frances Benjamin Johnston, 1901. Courtesy Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division, F. B. Johnston Collection, LC-DIG-ppmsca-18486.

student portraits with images of Indians at other boarding schools. The general visual resources at the Library of Congress can facilitate exploration of photographic studies of diverse schools from the same time period because the Frances Benjamin Johnston collection includes about one hundred views of the Carlisle Indian School from 1901 to 1903. In addition, Johnston's many views of Hampton Institute, Tuskegee Institute, and the Washington, D.C., public schools are available for comparison. Her extensive correspondence and personal papers are also available to check for information on when, how, why, and for whom she photographed schools (see fig. 12). Printed resources should be consulted, too. The Cumberland Historical Society offers relatively few photos online but has published an illustrated history of the Carlisle Indian School with about two hundred images (Witmer). The American Heritage Web site provides the text of articles about the Carlisle school and students, but the printed volumes must still be consulted to view the illustrations for the articles.

Figure 12. Washington, D.C., public schools—Sixth Division children in geology class. Cyanotype photo by Frances Benjamin Johnston, 1899. Courtesy Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division, F. B. Johnston Collection, LC-DIG-ppmsca-18487.

Learning General Picture Research Techniques

Time-tested techniques for locating images remain worth learning. The book *Picture Research: A Practical Guide* describes in detail what it is like to do research with both public repositories and commercial stock image agencies and also covers the special considerations involved in buying photographs for publication, including reproduction permissions and fees. The manual *Photographs: Archival Care and Management* provides a behind-the-scenes view of how repositories select, preserve, and access images. Knowing how archives acquire and arrange visual records can simplify use and improve understanding of collections.[2] Tip sheets or pathfinders compiled by libraries to orient researchers are helpful for getting acquainted with visual-research strategies. For example, "Women's History Resources in the Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division" describes in detail how to use collections relevant for many subjects at http://www.loc.gov/rr/print/coll/237_path.html.

Pictorial research can be simplified by answering several questions before beginning a project. A handheld camera for visual note taking is also helpful, when allowed.

- How will the photographs be used? As illustrations (a few selected pictures can suffice) or as historical evidence of information not available through other sources (all relevant pictures are needed)?
- How exhaustive a search is planned, and how much time is available?
- Will original materials need to be seen, or will reproductions suffice?
- What kinds of copies will be wanted? Digital, xerographic, or photographic; color or black-and-white? Ready reference or publication quality?
- What types of pictorial material need to be seen? Is the medium or format important? Should the images be contemporary to the historical era, or can they be an artist's interpretation?
- Has enough background information been gathered about the topic to be able to evaluate and interpret the images that are found?
- What words will be searched for to locate pictures, including subjects, dates, and names of associated individuals, organizations, places, and events?
- Which repositories will be consulted to do the research?

Seeking illustrations for teaching or for publishing projects is one of the most frequent situations for picture research. The following scenario indicates how the project-preparation questions influence a search for photographs. The scenario also underscores the importance of trying many different words when seeking pictures. Assume that a researcher has one week to find ten images to illustrate a lecture about the impact of diverse learning environments on children's education in the early 1900s. To limit the time invested, the researcher turns to a single, general picture source such as the Library of Congress's Prints & Photographs Online Catalog at http://www.loc.gov/rr/print/catalog.html. This resource describes more than eight million items, and more than one million are viewable online as digital reproductions with most available for downloading. The catalog has many features that facilitate visual research such as display of images and records together. Researchers should try combinations of many different words to facilitate retrieving relevant photographs.

Starting with the phrase *children's education* yields more than five hundred records for posters and cartoons as well as individual photos and groups of photos spanning the 1860s to 1970s. While browsing the digitized images and descriptions, the researcher observes that the photos of most interest have titles or subjects with the words *classroom* and *student*. Searching for those two words together narrows the display to about 250 images. Searching for *students* alone broadens the results again and brings up more than four thousand photos, including views of adult students. The catalog's online *Thesaurus for Graphic Materials* (http://lcweb2.loc.gov/pp/tgmiquery.html) has an entry for *students* that suggests additional words to try, including the more specific *school children* that leads to many highly relevant images. Searching for names of specific educators and educational institutions could also be useful.

An investment of about one hour leads to more than ten photos of the desired topic, including an open-air classroom in Chicago (see fig. 13). Reading the catalog records for these photographs helps confirm the time period of the images and the subject matter as well as the collection names. The Chicago school photo, for example, is one of hundreds of photos and periodical illustrations gathered by Louise Goldsberry in the early 1910s to document the benefits of open-air education in schools throughout the world. Using the collection name "Goldsberry Collection of Open-Air School Photographs" in a search reveals related images described with words not yet tried, such as *toothbrush drill*, *kindergarten*, and *manual training*. The catalog records also clarify the status of publication rights: public domain or permissions required. Rights concerns can be a major consideration for reproducing photographs, even for educational purposes, but a tip sheet is available to guide the risk analysis at http://www.loc.gov/rr/print/195_copr.html.

Reading Photographs

Once photographs are found, they need to be looked at carefully—analyzed and deciphered. "The ability to understand (read) and use (write) images and to think and learn in terms of images" is often called *visual literacy* (Hortin 25). The researcher can gain a basic skill level through simple exercises that involve looking at photos systematically and by becoming aware of common visual-presentation conventions. Archival research also emphasizes the importance of exploring

Figure 13. "Graham School, Chicago, Interior: Children Seated at Desks." Photographic print by F. P. Burke, ca. 1910. Courtesy Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division, Goldsberry Collection of Open Air School Photographs. LC-DIG-ppmsca-18484.

the context of image creation by looking at textual and visual resources related through a common source or provenance. Knowing who made the photographs, for which clients and audiences, and under what circumstances is critical for understanding the meaning of images.[3]

An instructive case study for learning to read large archival series of photographs is available in *Image Worlds*, which describes the massive photographic archive at General Electric from which author David E. Nye develops new insights into "the nature of ideology in a capitalist society" (9). Nye explains well the intentions of the corporation and its photographers and the technical constraints on capturing images that influences the results. He also deciphers the original order of the archival photographs to reveal their evolving functions. Advanced visual literacy involves iconography, semiotics, and other formal-analysis methods that are beyond the scope of this chapter. Several recent books describe the field well and increasingly incorporate material culture considerations.[4]

In order to learn methods for reading photographs, the researcher can start by looking for a full two minutes at one photograph and listing all the things seen in an image such as the English class by Lewis Hine (see fig. 14) or the Lopez family by John Collier (see fig. 15). Awareness of the researcher's own, possibly false, assumptions is important to recognize, along with checking for discrepancies between what a picture shows and what its caption says. Expanding the looking activity into writing one's own caption and verifying the information further develops visual literacy. Steps for scrutinizing photographs are these:

- Capture a first impression in a few words about what the image shows.
  - Name everything seen in the image.
  - Look at each part of the picture again.
- Write a narrative caption about what the picture might mean.
  - Read any existing information that accompanies the image.
  - Draft a short paragraph to describe not only what the photo shows but also to account for who made the picture, why, when, where, and how.
  - Identify any assumptions with question marks.
- Finalize the caption.
  - Verify the caption information by fact checking with reference sources and related textual and visual records.
  - Show the picture and caption to colleagues, and ask what they think.
  - Discuss how and why initial assumptions changed through research.

Hands-on experience with original photographs is invaluable. The researcher can develop appreciation for typical sizes, styles, functions, and subject matter by asking to use collections at a local archives or library, by going to see exhibits of old photographs, or by window-shopping at photo sales that feature historical images. Nothing beats the experience gained from time spent looking at original images, especially in a world where the usual fare is digital reproductions that mask some aspects of original visual artifacts.

Researching Photographs

Many photographs lack key pieces of the basic "who, what, when, and where" identifying information that is necessary for their use as historical evidence. The names, dates, and places provided in old captions may also need to be verified to confirm their accuracy. As with any research project, assumptions must be tested. What researchers think they see through the filter of modern perspectives may not be at all what is going on in photographs. For example, smiling prisoners might represent fear of reprisal rather than a happy situation. Empty streets might signify a camera's inability to capture moving traffic rather than a deserted town.

Figure 14. "Class in English for employees. Pocasset Mill. After day's work." Location: Fall River, Massachusetts. Photographic print by Lewis Hine, 1916. Courtesy Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division, National Child Labor Committee Collection, LC-DIG-nclc-05025.

Figure 15. "Trampas, New Mexico. Mrs. Maclovia Lopez can read and write English well; she also keeps the family books in the evening and helps the children with their homework." Safety film negative by John Collier, January 1943. Courtesy Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division, Farm Security Administration/Office of War Information Collection, LC-DIG-fsa-8d12762.

The following four research techniques can help with understanding the subject content of photographs and also the purposes for which they were made.[5]

Gather the Internal, Physical, and Contextual Evidence

The first step is to look at the photographs. Really look at them! Check the fronts and the backs of the pictures for both visual and textual clues.

- Study the photographs and their housings closely (e.g., envelopes and albums). Use a magnifying glass and adequate light to read the details. Note carefully any written information—from cryptic abbreviations or signatures to formal studio imprints and full titles.
- Describe all the things that could be checked in reference sources to help identify a place. Look for clues to help estimate time periods, including styles of buildings, clothing, equipment, furniture, and/or transportation systems.
- Ask what events or activities might have caused the creation of the photographs for insight into the images' original function and viewers. Family albums, for example, may represent only special events rather than daily life.
- Determine the images' style, form, and/or genre for clues to the creator and to unmask any hidden provenance information.
- Identify physical characteristics to check in histories of photography for clues to time periods. Are the image processes, formats, or sizes unusual? Is there color? What types of image mounts were used? What are the image bases—film, glass, metal, paper? Film negatives, for example, are unusual before 1900.
- Consider each image's placement within its collection. Is there an original order preserved from the photographer's own use of the image? Does that order offer clues to approximate dates of the image? Does a numeric arrangement indicate the availability of a photographer's logbook or a coded scheme to decipher and reveal client, date, or place name information? If an archive rearranged the photographs, does it have acquisition or processing records that document the original order that might reveal the original purpose of the picture?

Look for Similar Photographs and Text Sources

After developing a general idea of the subjects, creators, time periods, and functional roles, seek out identification and context information in related textual or visual records. Comparing images of the same general topic can either verify an educated guess about a subject or disprove a false identification. Consult other holdings at the archive. For example, are there dated photographs on similar mounts or identified images with the same backdrops and props?

- Check for related textual records and finding aids that might describe the source for the images, why the photographs were taken, and additional caption notes.
- Use online picture catalogs and Internet search tools to track down related material at other repositories.

Consult Reference Sources

Online as well as printed reference works can help verify a subject and time period or determine photographers' names and dates. When possible, verify the information in more than one source. The types of reference sources most frequently used to research photographs include the following printed and online sources:

- Pictorial histories provide clues for dating subjects and identifying buildings.
- Histories of photography help establish a general date span, media type, and/or functional role for images.
- Photography dictionaries and professional directories help determine photographers' full names, addresses, and dates.
- Biographical dictionaries and genealogical sources help verify names for people shown in portraits as well as photographers.
- City directories, business directories, telephone books, and yellow pages help identify street locations, match photographers' addresses to particular ranges of years, or obtain the full names of businesses that appear in the photographs.
- Maps help confirm addresses and positions for places and structures shown in photographs. Fire-insurance maps and atlases provide valuable information about individual structures in many cities and towns.
- Specialized registries provide dates and names for such things as aircraft, hotels, railroads, schools, ships, and sports events and athletes.

For a representative list of free Web sites useful for picture research, see "Online Reference Sources for Cataloging Visual Materials" at the Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division, http://www.loc.gov/rr/print/resource/vmrefcat.html.

Ask for Help

Don't be shy about asking for assistance. Show the photographs to people familiar with the suspected subject matter or with photographic history in general. Requesting advice is a good way to learn more about a specific photo and to gain clues to new sources for finding images related to the topic. Many people enjoy sharing their knowledge or solving mystery-identification puzzles. For example, when a researcher has trouble finding a photo of a particular individual or event, checking personal papers and corporate records that seem to contain only textual

information can yield treasures. Unidentified photos tucked inside of a letter might turn out to be the only known portraits of the researcher's subject.

Photographs not only enliven historical presentations, they can provide primary resource evidence of past lives, events, places, and ideas. Images already available online are likely to suffice when only a few illustrations are needed for a lecture or article. When undertaking in-depth or exhaustive research, however, it is beneficial to contact and visit archives to look at a comprehensive array of images and to gather all available contextual and textual clues to the meaning of the images from the perspective of the image creators and the intended audience as well as the subject content and cultural material characteristics.

Finding and researching photographs can be a complex endeavor. But more and more descriptions of archival images are available online each day, numerous tip sheets are available, and friendly archivists, librarians, and curators are ready to help. Learning to look at photographs and taking the time to look closely are the key ingredients to successful visual research.

Notes

1. For additional information on photographs as primary research sources, see Edward Linenthal, ed., with the assistance of Donna Drucker, "American Faces: Twentieth-Century Photographs"; John E. Carter, "The Trained Eye: Photographs and Historical Context"; Walter Rundell, "Photographs as Historical Evidence: Early Texas Oil"; Thomas J. Schlereth, "Mirrors of the Past: Historical Photography and American History," and Joan M. Schwartz and James R. Ryan, eds., *Picturing Place: Photography and the Geographical Imagination.*
2. For more information, see John Schultz and Barbara Schultz, *Picture Research: A Practical Guide*, and Mary Lynn Ritzenthaler and Diane Vogt-O'Connor, *Photographs: Archival Care and Management.*
3. For articles that explore the role of visual literacy in archives, see Elisabeth Kaplan and Jeffrey Mifflin, "'Mind and Sight': Visual Literacy and the Archivist." Additional sources are cited in the "Visual Materials: Processing & Cataloging Bibliography" at the Web site of the Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division: http://www.loc.gov/rr/print/resource/vmbib.html#research.
4. For thorough descriptions of formal visual-analysis techniques, see Peter Burke, *Eyewitnessing: The Uses of Images as Historical Evidence*; Gillian Rose, *Visual Methodologies: An Introduction to the Interpretation of Visual Materials*; and Elizabeth Edwards and Janice Hart, eds., *Photographs Objects Histories: On the Materiality of Images.*
5. Most of these tips are from Helena Zinkham, "Reading and Researching Photographs."

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LOOKING FOR LETTERS

Margaret J. Marshall

On and off for the last fifteen years, I've hunted for the correspondence regarding an essay written by the U.S. Commissioner of Education William Torrey Harris published in the June 1892 edition of the *Atlantic Monthly.* If this were the usual magazine article, such correspondence would be confined to the editor and the author, and so the search, one would think, would be rather simple and straightforward. If this were the usual magazine article, a rhetorical scholar would probably be interested in the correspondence only as an aside—the text itself would give plenty of material to analyze and interpret. But, as you can probably already tell, this is not the usual magazine article, and so my troubled search taught me lessons about archival work that might well be useful to others working with late-nineteenth-century materials.

What makes Commissioner Harris's essay, "The Education of the Negro," especially intriguing is its unusual rhetorical deployment of footnotes; the editor, Horace E. Scudder, solicited comments from others prior to publication and inserted those comments as footnotes. Though the commentators are identified in the piece and introduced as "four Southern Gentlemen," there is very little information in the piece itself to answer such questions as the following: Did Harris know that his essay would be treated in this way? Did he agree to the insertion of comments? Did he participate in selecting the commentators? Were these four the only people invited to comment? What criteria were used to select them for this unusual public forum? Did the editor modify the notes he received? Why was this piece chosen for such treatment, and why was the form not repeated? Such questions simply cannot be answered without contemporaneous documents of the kind usually located in manuscript and archival holdings.