

Lauren E Murphree. Wrangling the Lone Arranger: The Management Practices of Solo Archivists. A Master's Paper for the M.S. in L.S. degree. April, 2018. 50 pages. Advisor: Denise Anthony.

This paper describes a research study focused on the management practices of solo archivists, known in SAA as the "Lone Arrangers." Following a literature review, a gap in information about solo archivists and their actual daily practices was identified. An initial survey was used to identify a pool of archivists to interview. The following interviews sought to discover how solo archivists, in their challenging positions, manage the day-to-day tasks and decisions required by their jobs. The findings showed that these archivists develop a strong intuition informed by priorities, flexibility, and personal boundaries which allows them to balance multiple duties every day.

#### Headings:

One-person archives

Archives administration

Small archives

Small archives -- Management

Archives surveys

WRANGLING THE LONE ARRANGER:  
THE MANAGEMENT PRACTICES OF SOLO ARCHIVISTS

by  
Lauren E. Murphree

A Master's paper submitted to the faculty  
of the School of Information and Library Science  
of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for the degree of Master of Science in  
Library Science.

Chapel Hill, North Carolina

April 2018

Approved by

---

Denise Anthony

# Table of Contents

<b>Table of Contents .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Introduction.....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Literature Review .....</b>	<b>4</b>
Introduction .....	4
Best Practices.....	4
Solo Archivists .....	6
Existing Literature for Solo Archivists.....	11
Management for Solo Archivists .....	13
<b>Methods.....</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Findings.....</b>	<b>18</b>
Surveys .....	18
Interviews .....	22
<i>Challenges</i> .....	23
<i>Management</i> .....	27
<i>Resources</i> .....	29
<b>Discussion .....</b>	<b>32</b>
<b>Conclusion .....</b>	<b>38</b>
<b>Bibliography .....</b>	<b>41</b>
<b>Appendices.....</b>	<b>43</b>
Appendix A: Recruitment Letter .....	43
Appendix B: Recruitment Letter Follow-Up.....	44
Appendix C: Initial Survey .....	46
Appendix D: Interview Questions .....	47
Appendix F: Resources for Lone Arrangers.....	48

## Introduction

As long as the human race has created physical records, it has maintained archives.

Record formats and management practices may have changed over centuries, but archives and archivists remain an essential part of preserving history - from the financial records of a corporation to priceless documents such as the United States' Declaration of Independence. In the last few centuries, especially the most recent, archives have emerged as a separate field encompassing everything from the National Archives and Records Administration of the United States to local history societies which are completely volunteer run. Throughout this time and up to the present day, different voices have expressed what the "best practices" and standards for archives are and should be. These instructions change as materials and times change: as technology increases our abilities, and professional organizations such as the Society of American Archivists bring together the best minds to discuss and decide upon standards for archivists across America. This summer in Portland, OR, nearly two thousand archivists attended the 2017 SAA Annual Conference. It was my first attendance, and I quickly noticed that everyone was talking about the best possible way to do things: the "right way," or waiting for grants to pay for the "right way," about not touching things you couldn't handle. It really got me thinking, because I noticed that something was missing. What about small archives? Every archivist will say that he or she needs more resources, but small archives run by a single archivist often have very little support compared to even just slightly

larger archives that have more trained archivists, professional development budgets, money, and a longer tradition of archives in their institution. So what about the little guy, the “lone arranger” as the Society of American Archivists (SAA) calls them? Processing takes time, reference takes time, appraisal takes time – and as we all know, time is money. Preservation, processing materials, folders, electricity, maintenance, computers, staff – it’s an expensive business. As we will see in the literature, there is a gap in both instructional literature for and literature written by solo archivists about their daily practices. The realities of the archival profession, when viewed in light of this gap, raises important questions that this research seeks to address:

- *How do “solo” archivists in small institutions manage the day-to-day tasks involved with their specific jobs?*
- *What does the daily decision-making process of a “lone arranger” look like in the real world?*

# Literature Review

## Introduction

As evidenced by the thousands of people who are members of the SAA “Lone Arrangers” Section, and the hundreds of small institutions which hold and collect artifacts and papers of archival value, “a significant portion of our nation’s documentary heritage” is controlled by solo archivists (Carmicheal, 2012). And unlike those archivists who work at large centers of memory such as the National Archives, many of these archivists are amateurs and volunteers, people who stood up to the task when it was handed them but have little to no formal training in library science or archival studies. Their stories are just as important as those at larger institutions, but are often overlooked. The purpose of this literature review is to explore how past and present literature for archivists has addressed the difficulties of maintaining archival practice in an archive where there is only one archivist in charge of everyday management.

## Best Practices

First, what are archivists called upon to follow? Beginning in the late 1800s, a plethora of literature has been published discussing the purpose of archives, the archivist, and the goals of archival practice. Every discussion contributes valuable theory for the archivist to consider, and even if they differ, each guideline requires mental, physical, and fiscal resources - whether it be Jenkinson’s “keep everything” or Schellenberg’s levels of value and separation of the functions of archives and records management (Fisher, 2009). From

Helen Samuels, Terry Cook, Terry Eastwood, Luciana Duranti, and many more, archival theory abounds in “best practice” advice, with archivists each taking a different side or combining materials from different authorities to create an amalgamation of guidelines. For the student studying to be an archival professional, this literature can be confusing as each requires application to a different setting. Theory and discussion in the classroom is wonderful, but what happens when you are required to make a real-world decision? According to Randall Jimerson, “Theory and practice cannot be separated. They must work together, to ensure the preservation of archival records and the rights and guarantees they protect” (R. C. Jimerson, 2000, p. 190). However, for those who are new to the archival profession or have not received formal training, figuring out how to blend theory and methodology in real-world scenarios can be very difficult. How would a solo archivist trying to salvage a poorly organized small institutional archive respond to Laura Millar’s requirement that description involve “[explaining] the history of the creator, their records and how they came to be in that institution” (Millar, 2002, p. 2)? It is evident that best-practice literature has an impact on the profession, yet advice for small archives is rarely addressed as a part of this theory.

More recently, Greene’s “More Product, Less Process” articles, widely utilized by the archival community, have come the closest to presenting a feasible practice for small archives with solo archivists. The statement that “we should be paying more attention to achieving basic physical and intellectual control over, and thus affording research access to, all our holdings, rather than being content to process a few of them to perfection” has been widely debated by archivists across the world, including those who reside in small

archives (Greene & Meissner, 2005, p. 237; R. Jimerson, 2013). In the last few years the archival community has finally begun to place more emphasis on the user than the records themselves. Timothy L. Ericson's mission statement for the archival world that our purpose is "to ensure the availability and use of records of enduring value by identification, acquisition, description, and preservation" is a noble and high calling, but one that as will be shown below, can be stressful to archivists ill-equipped to manage the requirements of the user (McFarland, 2007, p. 146). Overall, while archival theory and best practice literature is useful and good in its own right, it does little to address the problems faced by solo archivists working with a large portion of our historical information in small institutions around the globe.

## Solo Archivists

Solo archivists have not kept quiet about their struggles, publishing a number of articles in *The American Archivist* and other journals outlining real-life experiences working at small archival institutions. In these articles, they report on particular projects or events while highlighting some of the challenges either unique to or intensified by the environment of a small archive with a small, paraprofessional staff. To be clear, these articles are not about bemoaning the plight of the solo archivist, but instead a collection of stories of triumph in the midst of the pressures of the "lone arranger."

Let's consider first the "lone arranger." In his book *Organizing Archival Records*, D. W. Carmichael points out that many of the "lone arrangers" sitting in small archives and local historical societies across the country do not have the training of archivists at larger institutions. In fact, the requirement for an MLIS or a certain number of hours in archival



training is not particularly old - the incoming generation for the most part have such a degree, but many of the older, accomplished archivists do not. This does not mean that they cannot do the job at hand, but it does make it more overwhelming to approach a large collection with no prior training in archival theory. This is supported by archivists in the literature. For example, in their article covering the Religious Archives Technical Assistance Project (RATAP) of the late 1980s, Wash and Yakel note that many of the religious institution archivists arising in the late 1980s had no professional training, which led to a sense of uncertainty and distance from other members of the profession. The purpose of RATAP was to address these and other problems in the small religious archives (Wosh & Yakel, 1992).

In other places, a trained historian might be doing the job of an archivist, and while these trainings can be similar in respects to the ability to appraise and describe documents of historical value, a historian is not equipped to deal with collections as they are processed today. After a lengthy article explaining how she took an archive with little to no usable finding aids and granted them an online presence through EAD, Elizabeth Dow, MA, History, says “I can hear the real archivists among you bemoaning the devaluation of the neighborhood, and I sympathize” (Dow, 1997, p. 454). Despite her apparent abilities, Dow speaks of herself in a self-deprecating way because of her lack of “formal archival training” (Dow, 1997). Beyond just “not formally educated,” these archivists don’t give us much else information on how that aspect of their career affects them. Perhaps they should talk to some “real archivists” and see if it really makes a difference!

Another big problem which affects everyone but especially small archives is the issue of funding. If an archivist ever says “we just have too much money and we don’t know what to do with it,” lock him up in the looney bin or send him to a therapist because he has lost his mind. In a chapter from the book *Archives For the Future*, Grace Koch mentions several challenges that solo archivists in Australian ethnographic archives face. More than once she discusses funding. She points out that growth is always expected of archives, at least in her circumstances, yet funding cuts continue (Koch, 2004). More recently, in an article about a small archive in northern Michigan, Marcus Robyns and Jason Woolman set the context for their archive by saying that its “operating budget has remained flat while its collections, use rate, and services continue to grow” (Robyns & Woolman, 2011, p. 242). This can become especially problematic when digital records come into play, as is the case with Joseph Williams and Elizabeth Berilla’s article on establishing a digital repository at a small institution “with limited funds and staff” (Williams & Berilla, 2015, p. 88).

Beyond just growing your archive, a lack of funds can inhibit the archivists ability to process already existing collections. As Dow says, and this may be true for many other archives, “UVM (the University of Vermont) fully processes manuscript collections only when we have special grant money or other beneficial circumstances” (Dow, 1997, p. 454). This reflects back on the “best practices” of functional processing and the present issue of making the archives user focused. Dow used EAD to publish container lists so that there is at least a small amount of intellectual access instead of none whatsoever. For Suzanne Pevar, archivist and author of the article “Success as a Lone Arranger: Setting

Priorities and Getting the Job Done,” it presents another problem: can the archive even handle reference requests if it does not have the time or funds to process? “It just does not make sense to me to take steps that could lead to an increase in reference requests that we are not yet prepared to handle” (Pevar, 2005).

Pevar’s comment about handling requests leads into one of the most important challenges to understand for the solo archivist - the pressure of performing multiple duties that under other circumstances might instead be split up among a number of different archivists.

Here is the issue at hand, explicitly expressed by Suzanne Pevar in her introduction: “The archivist who works alone in a repository...has the responsibility of handling all areas of archives management, including appraising, accessioning, processing, arrangement and description, reference and outreach” (Pevar, 2005). This long list is further expounded upon by Mary Manning and Judy Silva in the article “Dual Archivist/Librarians: Balancing the Benefits and Challenges of Diverse Responsibilities.” Their list includes over twenty responsibilities that an archivist or librarian working in any repository might find themselves required to perform on a regular or semi-regular basis.

In his article, outlining the establishment of an archive at a university in the late 1960s, W. Kent Hackmann revealed that the archivist had no prior training, yet was responsible for building an archive from the ground up - establishing intellectual control over a body of records that had been miraculously saved yet otherwise neglected - all while working only four hours a week (Hackmann, 1968)! Providing further evidence of this

phenomenon of overwhelming duties, Koch discusses the issues of “coping with increased demand and less staff” (Koch, 2004).

Solo archivists are well aware of these pressures bringing unneeded anxiety into the workplace. In their survey of archivists, librarians, and those with both duties, Manning and Silva found that “survey respondents voiced concerns about performing all of their work competently. They expressed anxiety both about the quality and the quantity of their work because ‘of the diversity of responsibilities’” (Manning & Silva, 2012, p. 175). In larger archives such as tier one research universities, the institution might hire a processing archivist, an outreach archivist, a reference archivist, and so on, and while each of these will share other duties as well, none will find themselves being stretched so greatly as the “lone arranger.”

So, where do solo archivists go to find advice on their multiple duties? Not the literature, according to the authors discussed above. There is a *lack* of literature addressing the challenges of small archives, and these archivists see that as being a challenge in and of itself. For example, while trying to prepare for building a digital archives, Williams and Berilla found that there is not a lot of discussion about the practical application of digital preservation at small archives, resulting in extra work for the archivists as they tried to figure out the best solution to their situation (Williams & Berilla, 2015). Thirty years earlier, in analyzing the results of the RATAP from the later 1980s, Wosh found evidence of “the profession’s failure to address realistically the nature, role, importance, and uniqueness of smaller archives” (Wosh & Yakel, 1992, p. 474).

## Existing Literature for Solo Archivists

Not only is there little literature written by solo archivists, who comprise over a thousand members of SAA as participants in the Lone Arranger Section, but for those archivists who wish to consult “best practices” or even basic training literature for archivists, it is lacking in its ability to address the complexities of small archives. Recently, two books have been published on the subject: *The Lone Arranger: Succeeding in a Small Repository*, by Christina Zamon, and *Organizing Archival Records* by D.W. Carmicheal, but they are the first after many years of nothing. Throughout the literature written by solo archivists, from 1968 through 2015, the refrain referencing a “lack of literature” on management in small archives is echoed. It is important to note that there *is* literature written for solo archivists. Not much, but it does exist. Specifically, there are three books which contain advice intended to be directed at the “lone arranger.” One of the earliest works about small archives and/or solo archivists, written before the majority of the articles discussed above, is *A Manual for Small Archives*. Originally published in 1988, it came as a response to the writers’ own personal discussions about the need for such a book, which they verified by a survey to small archives throughout the Association for British Columbia Archivists (Baird & Coles, 1998). Essentially, it is a “how-to” manual for archivists with limited professional training. Although it includes important mantras such as “each archives is unique, with its own priorities, goals, and problems,” it does not directly address the particular issues facing solo archivists, such as juggling duties and dealing with a lack of funding (Baird & Coles, 1998). Because this manual provides instructions on how to process materials, focusing on those archivists without masters in library science or archival studies, it is helpful for exactly those people.

Similar problems arise with D. W. Carmicheal's *Organizing Archival Records*, first published in 1993, a year before the Association of British Columbia Archivists released a version of their *Manual* with revisions. Carmicheal also aims his advice and instruction at those who have "little or no formal training in archival work but who [are] responsible for the care of historical records" (Carmicheal, 2012). This book covers mainly processing, particularly arrangement and description. The instructions are detailed and would be very helpful to a person who did not have professional training in this area, a real issue already discussed. However, a solo archivist learning about these things for the first time might be terribly overwhelmed by the level of detail that Carmichael goes into. Carmicheal is definitely not advising the use of "More Product, Less Process," not even in his updated 2012 edition of *Organizing Archival Records*. His instructions for solo archivists require a level of detail which is not compatible with MPLP, although that framework might work better for the busy lone arranger.

In contrast to these two manuals for the under-trained professional is Christina Zamon's relatively recent work *The Lone Arranger: Succeeding in a Small Repository*. As a solo archivist herself, Zamon demonstrates a much better level of understanding about the challenges of small archival institutions. She echoes Wosh and Yakel's observation in 1992 about the separation of solo archivists from the general profession, citing it as a potential reason why small repositories "are often underrepresented or overlooked in archival literature" (Zamon, 2012). Like Baird, Cole, and Carmicheal's, Zamon's book has a manual-like feel, but it appears to be oriented towards archivists with a variety of educational backgrounds. Rather than focusing on processing collections, Zamon covers

budgeting, reference, outreach, disaster planning, student and volunteer workers, the digital age, and basic administration *alongside* collections management. In fact, guidelines for processing methods only involve one chapter. Each chapter includes a set of questions to help the reader understand where they are situated in their own archive. While providing instructions for best practices, she also includes important caveats for solo archivists such as “when it comes to processing collections, lone arrangers must learn to let go a little bit” (Zamon, 2012). As Zamon says in the introduction to her volume, a book of this level aimed with advice that can actually be helpful has been searched for among solo archivists for years. In her take on advising archivists, informed by her research and experiences as a lone arranger, Zamon rises beyond instructions on processing to a high-level view of managing the myriad of jobs that come in addition to, and as we shall see, may be more important than, actually processing collections.

## Management for Solo Archivists

One of the more useful articles other than Suzanne Pevar’s that seeks to advise solo archivists is Colleen McFarland’s now ten-year-old paper entitled “Rethinking the Business of Small Archives.” In this paper, she challenges the assumption that processing is the most important job of an archivist, pointing instead to the essential aspects of proper management in small archives. Boldly, McFarland asserts that “the worldview of the solo archivist is most visible in his or her management practices - how the solo archivist uses his or her time, prioritizes tasks, and nurtures the archival program” (McFarland, 2007, p. 138). Pointing out that the management of solo archives “is largely overlooked in our profession,” she goes on to prove “that every solo archivist is a manager” based on Peter Drucker’s widely used discussions on management practice

(McFarland, 2007, p. 138). A solo archivist herself, McFarland is well aware of the difficulties facing lone arrangers. She is not by any means approaching the world of lone arrangers and telling them what they should do from an uninformed perspective.

After searching the literature for articles written by solo archivists and librarians, she observes that “lone arrangers tend to focus on the limitations of their environments, while solo librarians seek the possibilities inherent in those same limitations” (McFarland, 2007, p. 141). McFarland notices in her research and personal experience that the lone arranger tends to retreat to processing while potentially neglecting areas of outreach and reference. This is an issue that Pevar, Dow, and Koch all brought up in discussions of their environments, all particularly being worried about their capabilities for providing access to users (Dow, 1997; Koch, 2004; Pevar, 2005). Pevar discusses the importance of “prioritizing” tasks, and McFarland shows that it is not just about managing the archive; success for solo archivists is rooted in personal management (McFarland, 2007; Pevar, 2005). However, McFarland’s solution for this is to change to a user-centered approach. This is not a wrong solution, but it is just one solution, based more on literature than research with individual archivists in their own settings. Therefore, ten years after McFarland’s call to management, there is a need to explore how individual archivists working today in real environments are approaching the management of both their archives and themselves. In this study, I will attempt to explore this area and add to the literature by speaking with members of the Lone Arrangers Section of SAA.



## Methods

Before undertaking this research project, I contacted members of the Lone Arrangers Section of SAA to gauge what type of interest solo archivists might have in this type of study. The response was overwhelming, with nearly fifty members replying within a few days to offer their support and indicate that they were interested in being interviewed. Because this large number is out of scope for the range of a master's paper, I first conducted a survey of these members, in order to decide who to interview. The survey provided me with information about each archivists' institution, mainly, what type (educational, collecting, federal, etc.), staffing information, and basic statistics about the archive as well as information about the archivist themselves. The goal of this survey was to allow me to choose members of the section from a variety of institutional and educational backgrounds to interview.

After sending an official recruitment letter to invite more members of the Lone Arrangers Section to participate, follow-up emails were sent to the fifty-odd members who expressed interest in the study, inviting them to take the initial survey and explaining the confidentiality measures that would be taken in addition to how the study would progress. Twenty-four people participated in the initial survey, which was administered over the latter half of January 2018 and ended on February 15, 2018. One of the respondent's answers were set aside because the archivist worked at an institution which employed more than one full-time archivist and thus did not fit the purview of this study. The rest

of the respondents were given code names based on their institution (Educational 1, Local 4, etc.). Those that indicated in the survey that they were available to be interviewed were then separated again and a combination of purposive and random sampling was used to choose interviewees.

First, because the intention of the research was to talk to archivists with a variety of backgrounds, the sampling was purposive and based on type of institution. I divided the willing participants by institution type, with two sections for educational based on location, as the majority of survey respondents worked in archives at academic institutions. They were separated into Educational East and Educational West based on the location of the archive either east or west of the Mississippi River. Each participant was numbered and a random number generator was used to select one participant from each section. Afterwards, the selections were quickly analyzed to see if the other data points of staffing and educational background were also well distributed across the candidates. Educational background was of particular interest based on the findings in the literature about the challenges faced by those who have received only on the job training. None of those participants with only on the job training were selected, so a list of those with such a background was made and the random number generator utilized again. A collecting archivist was chosen and thus replaced the previous candidate for that group. I also made a change for the corporate archivist section, because of the difficulties of international correspondence combined with the time constraints on research. I used the random number generator again to choose another archivist. After I sent out invitations to interview, the local archivist selected expressed that her availability had changed, and I

thus repeated the process. Finally, an additional archivist from each education section was chosen because of the large number of respondents, bringing the number of interviewees up to seven lone arrangers.

I conducted semi-structured interviews with those chosen from the results of the survey. The purpose of these interviews was to hear a narrative from solo archivists and gather information about how each archivist manages both themselves and the functions of their archive. The interviews were performed via phone and recorded using the iPhone app “TapeACall.” Assent was taken verbally from each participant before recording. The questions were designed to help the researcher learn more about the context of the interviewee and the daily challenges, tasks, and decisions that she/he faces, so not every question applied to all interviewees. The “tell me about your archive” portion of the survey was used to inform the structure of the interview.

The main questions I asked are found in Appendix D, but occasionally in each interview I also asked a clarifying question or a question specific to that archivist’s situation and experience. The interviews ranged in duration from 21 minutes to 59 minutes with an average of 38 minutes. After the interviews were completed, I transcribed the sessions and analyzed them for trends as I sought to both write the narrative of how solo archivists manage their tasks and discover if there were common themes either discussed or not discussed in the literature that would be useful to those practicing in small archives. Survey and structured interview questions are included in an appendix.

## Findings

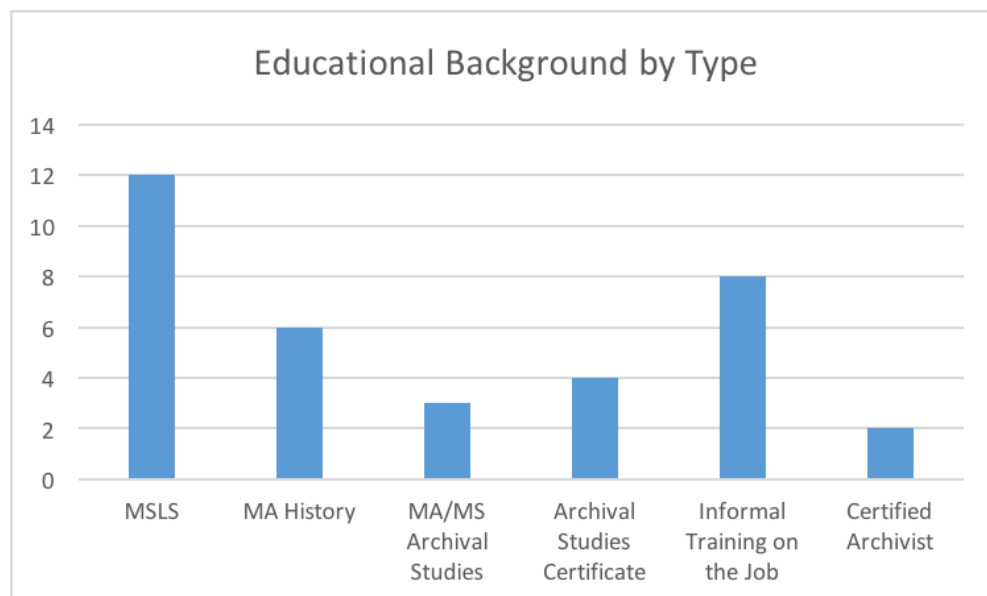
### Surveys

Because I intended the surveys not to address the research questions but to provide me with a pool of archivists from which to interview, the questions asked were quantitative in nature. The surveys focused on information about four data points from which I wanted to make sure that I interviewed a sample: educational background, staffing, location (determined from institution), and type of institution. After weeding out one respondent's answers because they did not fit the purview of this study, the total number of completed surveys was twenty-three. One question from the survey, has been omitted from these results because it contains identifying information and I used it only to inform interviews, not choosing interviewees.

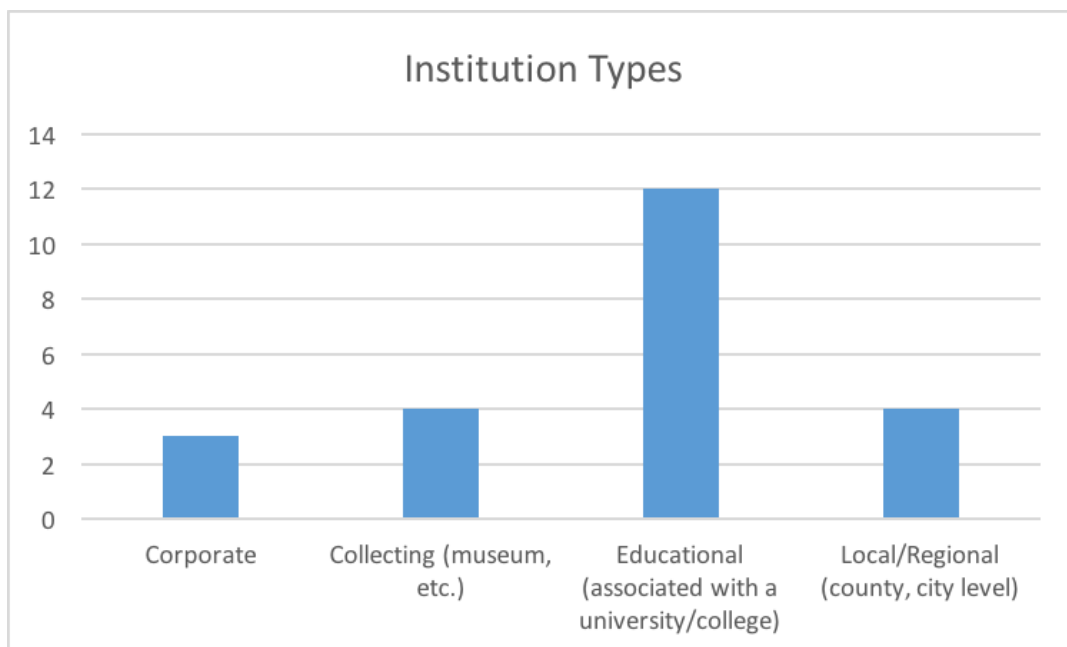
As shown below in Table 1 and Chart 1, archivists with a wide variety of educational backgrounds and degree combinations responded to the initial survey. Over half of the participants either had received a Master's of Science in Library Science (or the comparable MLIS) or were in the process of completing it. Several participants had also combined a Master's of Arts in History with other education and experience. While only three respondents had only informal training, several archivists indicated it as an important part of their archival education by including it in their answer. There were fewer participants with a MA or MS in Archival Studies.

**Table 1: Educational Background: Survey Responses**

<b>Educational Background</b>	
MSLS	6
MA, History	1
MA/MS, Archival Studies	2
Master's Certificate-Archival Studies	1
Informal Training on the Job	3
MSLS; Certified Archivist	1
MSLS; MA, History	2
MSLS; Master's Certificate-Archival Studies	1
MSLS; Informal Training on the Job	2
MA, History; Informal Training on the Job	1
MA, History; Master's Certificate-Archival Studies; Informal Training on the Job	2
MA/MS, Archival Studies; MA, History; Certified Archivist	1
Master's Certificate-Archival Studies; Informal Training on the Job	1

**Chart 1: Educational Background of Survey Respondents**

When it came to institution types, the archivists responding to the survey were overwhelmingly from educational institutions such as colleges and universities. The other, slightly smaller half was divided almost equally between corporate, collecting, and local archives, as shown below in Chart 2. Staffing, on the other hand, was almost equally split. Only one responding archivist indicated that the archive was only managed by paraprofessional staff, while an equal number of respondents worked in archives managed by a single archivist or one archivist plus paraprofessional staff such as volunteers, student workers, or part-time employees.

**Chart 2: Institution Types of Survey Respondents****Chart 3: Staffing of Survey Respondents**

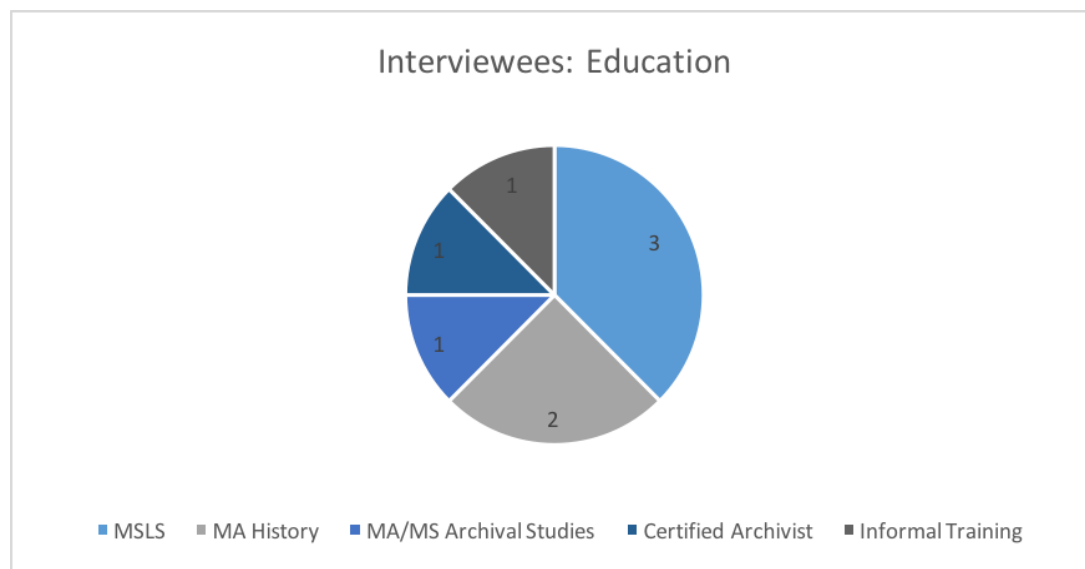
## Interviews

I interviewed seven people following a combination of random and purposive sampling, detailed above in the methods section: One local archivist, one collecting archivist, one corporate archivist, and two each of archivists from educational institutions east and west of the Mississippi River. Table 2 below shows the relevant information about each interviewee. I did not realize until analyzing my results that while the survey at large included an equal number of participants working by themselves and working with paraprofessional staff, only two participants with additional staff were interviewed. The rest were solo archivists, and one part-time archivist, the only archivist in that situation to respond to my survey. Their education, however, was well spread out and representative of the larger group, as shown in Chart 4 below.

**Table 2: Interviewee Information**

<b>Interviewee</b>	<b>Institution Type</b>	<b>Staffing</b>	<b>Educational Background</b>	<b>Location</b>
Corporate 1 (Interview 2)	Corporate Archive	One Archivist	MSLS, Certified Archivist	Virginia
Collecting 4 (Interview 7)	Collecting Archive	Paraprofessional Staff	Informal Training on the Job	Tennessee
Local 1 (Interview 6)	Local Archive	One Archivist	MA, History	North Carolina
Educational 11 (Interview 3)	University Archive	One Archivist, Paraprofessional Staff	MSLS, MA, History	Alabama
Educational 6 (Interview 1)	University Archive	One Archivist	MSAS	California
Educational 12 (Interview 4)	Secondary School Archive	One Archivist, Paraprofessional Staff	MSLS, MCAS	New York
Educational 4 (Interview 5)	University Archive	One Archivist	MSLS, Informal Training on the Job	Texas



**Chart 4: Interviewee Educational Background**

The interviews focused on finding information that would be useful in answering the research questions addressed by this study. This concentrated the questioning around a few main points: the challenges of being a “lone arranger,” what a “typical day” looked like in their situation, how they prioritized tasks, and what resources they found useful or wanted to see more often. The main interview questions can be found in Appendix D. Generally, the findings from the interviews supported and expanded on information found in the literature, despite the fact that many answers were contingent upon the archivist’s specific situation.

### *Challenges*

Each archivist detailed challenges that were situation-specific, but even so common themes ran through, stated in various ways. Findings about the challenges faced by solo archivists echoed those found in the literature, especially regarding the pressure of performing multiple duties. One interviewee summed up her challenges this way: “it’s a balancing act between all the kinds of duties that need to happen at the same time”

(Interview 1). Another archivist expressed her experience with this challenge by saying “as a solo archivist you’re doing all the conservation work you can, you’re doing all the digitizing, all the transferring, you really are doing so many different things that you constantly have to be teaching yourself new tools and tricks, and then every six months it changes” (Interview 4). As lone arrangers, the archivists interviewed were responsible not just for processing, but also for collection development, program building, reference, outreach and engagement, and then of course, their own professional development. Of the seven archivists interviewed, four were also required to work in the library in which the archives dwelled. This duty, separate from but in addition to their archival responsibilities, contributes to another challenge which all of the participants expressed: time.

Time is a challenge which is also well documented in the literature, and no doubt is familiar to all information professionals. With solo archivists, however, that challenge seems to be intensified. For some of the interviewees, the nature of their position and institution meant that they were required to do that job on top of working in a busy library, as was the case with three of the educational archivists. Between that struggle and the “balancing act” discussed earlier, one archivist said that his main challenge is “actually finding time to do the job you were hired to do” (Interview 3). Juggling institutional obligations such as teaching and committees, responding to research requests, and supervising paraprofessional staff takes up most of the time that would be otherwise spent gaining intellectual control of the collections and advertising about the archives. Another archivist, working in a newly established special collections,

immediately responded to the question with “Time, because I didn’t lose a job and gain a job, I just got added on top of a job” (Interview 5). This was the situation for a couple of the archivists, who got added to jobs which they did not have prior training for, leading into a third challenge which was discussed in the literature by authors such as D.W. Carmicheal: a lack of formal archival training.

Three of the seven archivists interviewed did not have formal archival training in the form of an MSLS, Masters of Archival Science, or Certificate in Archival Science, leading two of them to seek out such education in addition to their full-time jobs. For two of them it really made a difference, requiring them to seek out a lot of information and learn on the go. This could be difficult without prior training in information science, as one archivist shared that she could not say much about her experience with literature because she really didn’t know how to find it. Other archivists expressed that they had to spend a lot of time looking for materials which would be useful, and as has already been established, that time is precious to a lone arranger.

Another challenge discussed earlier in the literature review is funding. Interestingly, this was not a topic that seemed to be bemoaned as much by the interviewees as it has been by solo archivists in the literature. Only a few of the archivists had experience with grants, whether because it wasn’t necessary, as with a couple of well-funded participants, or because grants did not apply, as with the corporate archivist. However, for those that did utilize grants, those grants were essential to their work. “I could not have done what I have been able to do without grants,” said one archivist from an academic institution,

who had used a few different grants to fund conservation efforts, and was replying to a question about whether or not grants were worth the time they required to write the initial grant, perform the work, and write up the report (Interview 3). Grants are not the only issue with funding, however, although they may be the most discussed in the literature through articles such as Suzanne Pevar's "Success as a Lone Arranger: Setting Priorities and Getting the Job Done" and Elizabeth Dow's "EAD and the Small Repository." More than one archivist interviewed discussed how they had to justify everything that they needed funds for, leading to a final and complex challenge faced by archivists who are working alone: facing the expectations and understandings of others, especially those who control the funds.

When asked about challenges she faced, the first archivist interviewed said "expectation [of] what is doable and what is needed" (Interview 1). That theme was echoed throughout the interviews. "That has been the big wall, is explaining to the bosses and explaining to the board of commissioners every year justifying my budget, and of course they give me a very tiny budget, which is funny because they're always coming to me saying I need this..." (Interview 6). Justifying budgets to people with no archival background and perhaps not even a library background, as in the case of the local archivist, is a major challenge faced by the lone arrangers. This is a challenge that is not really covered in the literature, but one that is very familiar to solo archivists, who do not have the support of other archivists to back up their expertise. One of the interviewees said, "of course you're the campus expert and people are going to listen to you but if you want them to take you seriously you get someone else to say it for you," when discussing how he managed to

get the archives space expanded by the university (Interview 3). Before the “higher-ups” would grant that expense, he had to write a NEH Preservation Assistance Grant which brought an “expert” down to convince the administration.

### *Management*

Being the only archivist in the room makes for an interesting management situation, as discussed in Colleen McFarland’s article “Rethinking the Business of Small Archives.” To learn about each solo archivist’s experience and management perspectives, I asked a few questions about what handling their tasks looked like. Unsurprisingly, everyone had tasks that they wanted to get to but just didn’t have the time - a phenomenon which I defy you to counteract in today’s fast-paced world. For each archivist it was something different, from writing more in depth metadata to increasing the archives’ web presence.

When it came to asking the interviewees about their typical day, the responses were rather interesting. For some, they had an answer ready: their days are loosely structured around types of tasks like answering emails, processing analog materials, and working with digital materials (Interview 2). Those with multiple “jobs,” however, discussed earlier as having both library and archives duties, with the other, normal institutional responsibilities stacked on top, had different answers. The local history archivist probably summed it up the best for the group when he answered “Typical day, what’s that? No, I will say this the lady who helps me summed it up well when she said ‘Your day comes at you like a freight train’” (Interview 6). This relates back to the challenges of juggling duties and finding enough time to “do the job you were hired to do” (Interview 3). When it came down to it, all of the interviewees worked on a few main tasks everyday:

answering emails, working on research requests, and processing, in all of its many-faceted glory.

What about priorities? Setting priorities is one of the major points McFarland discusses in her article on small archives management. This aspect of managing yourself and your archives as a solo archivist ties back to the challenge of expectations from on high. For some of the archivists, their priorities were generally decided through discussions with supervisors, normally the head of the library to which the archive was attached. With others, setting priorities was a more loose rule, decided by “whichever one’s causing the biggest bleeding ulcer” (Interview 6), or “whatever I feel like doing” (Interview 7). However, setting those priorities was still an important part of the daily routine for most of the archivists, even if it was not as conscious as McFarland might hope. In general, each archivist set his/her priorities based on the priorities of the institution, a decision that may be common sense but which, as we will see later, I believe is very important to the management process of the lone arranger.

When asked “do you see yourself as a manager,” the responses were rather mixed. Most of the interviewees responded by discussing how they were the head of their department within the larger institution, but that they reported to someone else. Perhaps some answers might have been slightly different had I better been able to communicate my interest in whether or not they view themselves as their own personal manager, as outlined in Colleen McFarland’s article. The first two times I asked this question I phrased it as “do you consider yourself a manager, not only of your archive but of

yourself?” Phrasing it this way elicited better responses, as shown in the large quote below, and should have been done throughout the interviews. This is a question, however, where the answers are very much influenced by the specific situation, for example, how involved the archivists’ library superiors are with the management of the archives. Only two of the seven archivists interviewed worked in archives that were not attached to libraries. Of these, one worked only a few hours a week with no supervision, and had the ability to choose to work on what she felt like doing. The other was the corporate archivist, and the only one to immediately understand and answer the question. However, I do believe that in hearing what the corporate archivist had to say, most if not all of them would agree.

“Do you see yourself as a manager, not only of your archive but of yourself?”

“Oh yeah absolutely. Yeah cause I, and I think especially in this sort of situation where I’m in no one understand what I do...they don’t really understand the nitty gritty so I really do have to manage my own time and my own thinking and how far do I want to go on this collection. There really is no one else to ask, because before the library director had some idea of what I was talking about but here the company just doesn’t have the background to understand why I’m doing these sorts of things.” (Interview 2)

### *Resources*

Given the challenges of solo archivist management, plus the evident lack of literature regarding lone arrangers, I was interested to know how these archivists find supporting resources to advise them and help them in their endeavors. As expected, nearly all of the archivists had a copy of Christina Zamon’s book *The Lone Arranger: Succeeding in a Small Repository*. However, although they named it quickly, none of them seemed to regard it as a particularly helpful resource. “She didn’t delve as deep as I thought she would or wanted her to into the small local realm, and a lot of what she was saying still

applied to the big universities,” said one participant (Interview 6). The most common answer was that finding resources to help them in their situation as a solo archivist was a “piecemeal effort” (Interview 2). Resources from state archives, from SAA, from state associations, preservation associations, and various peer-reviewed articles were all commonly mentioned by the archivists. In addition, they all praised the Lone Arrangers Section Listserv for its helpfulness in bringing the solo archivists together and for the willingness of its members to answer the same questions over and over again with useful information. “Relying on the archivist down the road who’s in the same situation is almost as reliable as the literature itself” (Interview 3).

Despite having these resources, these archivists are by no means satisfied with what is available to help them in their unique and individual situations as lone arrangers. At least three of the interviewees mentioned their frustration with the lack of a central webpage maintained by the Lone Arrangers Section bringing together resources for solo archivists. They expressed a desire to see things like glossaries of technical terms that would help them in reading digital materials information, and reference pages with links to articles and guidelines on different topics. Additionally, a couple of members pointed out that it would be great to have additional sections within Lone Arrangers - because after all, this group includes over a thousand members and encompasses different types of institutions and repositories, and it could be useful to bring, say, all of the solo archivists working at secondary schools, or corporate archives, into one group.



When asked whether or not they would like to see more literature about solo archivists, each archivist replied in the affirmative. “Yes, I’ve been an advocate for years because well as you know for centuries archives have been the priority of the big boys, universities and colleges. And they have dominated the field for years. And no offense to them that’s been wonderful but I think that the tide is changing...and yeah, I think there needs to be a whole lot more literature” (Interview 6). However, this question also exposed an issue related to those archivists who do not have formal training. Those without formal training do not necessarily have the education to know that resources exist or how to go looking and find them, which is counterproductive when you consider how even more useful many of these resources would be in the hands of archivists without formal archives education. The lone arranger in this situation who was interviewed replied to this line of questioning by saying “probably, but I wouldn’t know about those unless I read them on the lone arranger website, or unless I knew how to Google to get that information. So I’ve not really gone out looking for what you’re talking about” (Interview 7).

## Discussion

The findings from the surveys and interviews are not necessarily surprising given the literature and reasonable expectations of what being a lone arranger might entail.

However, tallying the challenges of solo archivists was not the purpose of this study.

Generally, the relevant data was acquired in the seven interviews, and generated a picture of how each archivist operated within their specific situation. There are a few limitations which constrain this study. First, time - the short period in which this research had to be conducted resulted in speaking to only seven archivists, and each of them only once.

Second, although the selecting the interviewees was purposive and random, this process did not represent the staffing results well, favoring heavily those who work only on their own without paraprofessional staff. Third, both during a few of the interviews and when analyzing the transcribed materials, I realized that the question about management was phrased in a way that was confusing to the archivists and did not necessarily generate the results I intended.

Nevertheless, the findings still provide an interesting picture into the lives of solo archivists, granting an opportunity to address the specific research questions that this study set out to answer. First, *how do “solo” archivists in small institutions manage the day-to-day tasks involved with their specific jobs?* To be completely blunt, they just *do*. The solo archivist’s set of tools includes a seemingly intangible quality that allows them to handle the challenges they face among the tasks which they are required to

efficiently perform. Managing a lone arranger's archive requires an intuition honed by their experiences and their individual situation, such as that of Educational Archivist 12, who splits her time between working directly in the archives and working on archive materials while also supervising a school library. This is one of the hallmarks of our profession - any advice really must include a caveat that "it depends" based on one's context, because best practice literature is meant to serve as a guide which must be interpreted and applied with the archivist's best judgment based on their own circumstances.

If this quality is "intangible," in the form of tacit skills, what hope is there for the current or future lone arranger to figure out how to handle their own personal "freight train"? Thankfully, the findings from these interviews present some helpful information on how solo archivists develop their own best practices. Their practice is divided into two main categories: prioritize and find helpful resources. While generally these two actions lead the solo archivist's way in management, it is important to remember one other finding from this study: that despite many general similarities, the practical application can look very different for each archivist.

Given the challenges discussed earlier, how does a lone arranger prioritize? As with any position functioning within a larger institution, prioritization often begins with supervisor input. Educational Archivist 6 describes sitting down with her supervisor to decide on the big things that need to get done. Other archivists described similar situations, where priorities are set using a blend of supervisor desires and the personal expertise of the lone

arranger. What about situations like Local Archivist 1, Collecting Archivist 4, or Educational Archivist 4, where the supervisors are not as hands-on? In these situations, as with all, the most common theme extrapolated from speaking with the archivists is that the mission of the institution - its collecting policy, its goals, its purpose in serving the community – effects how the archivist deals with the day-to-day. For example, Educational Archivist 11, when asked about his priorities and daily tasks, answered with a focus on serving the students.

“So, how do you prioritize your tasks?”

“\*Laughs.\* Whatever is the most pressing. I try, I typically prioritize by servicing the students and faculty requests. I mean the whole reason we’re here is students taking classes and working and all, and I want them to use the archives as much as possible, so that’s priority one, and with that my student workers and my interns...because some of them are considering it as a career.” (Interview 3)

Other archivists agree with the sentiment behind his prioritizing, if not the specific decision. For each archivist, such as Educational Archivist 11, operating within a University Library focused on serving its students, contextual information about the institution provided the strongest catalyst for prioritizing, a fact that I believe is very important for current and future lone arrangers to consider. For some, following the mission of the institution included prioritizing its patrons and its donors above the more minute details of processing, which may be difficult for many archivists and potential processors to accept, but is a complex relationship that requires a delicate balance.

Within the operating bounds of the institutional mission, the archivists identified the importance of being flexible when setting priorities. Solo archivists manage the day-to-day tasks involved in their jobs by remaining flexible, able to move from processing to answering a patron request to dealing with someone who just walked in the door as

needed, and then back again. It is interesting to see how dealing with the very challenges that they face - juggling multiple duties - is a challenge in and of itself. One archivist in particular noted how his priorities had to be “floating” throughout the day depending on what walked in the door. “I learned many years ago in museums and it’s served me very well to be extremely flexible in my priorities and the schedule of my day...but I do try to have, I do try to set those as the priorities, these [as] sort of the general top priorities” (Interview 6). Managing the complex nature of a solo archivist’s position requires setting priorities and then adopting a flexible position within that framework that allows them to manage the various tasks and problems that present themselves to the lone arranger on a daily basis.

In addition to prioritizing, the archivists interviewed made use of helpful resources when managing various tasks, whether processing or communicating with supervisors. A full list of the resources identified by archivists interviewed as helpful for their jobs is included in Appendix F. Useful resources for the solo archivist have already been discussed in the findings section, but there are two main groups of resources which stood out as aiding in the day-to-day. First, description guidelines. Almost every single archivist mentioned having a couple of guidelines, such as DACS, on hand for aiding in description while processing. These standards, while incredible important, are difficult to remember, and having them on hand is good advice for other archival professionals. Second, the solo archivists managed their day-to-day tasks by seeking help from other professionals. This collaborative element, focused on but not limited to the Lone Arrangers Section Listserv, emerged from in the interviews as a vital part of archivists’ ability to deal with a wide variety of jobs. “I feel like there is a lot to be said for

collective activity, because I feel like solo archivists do spend a lot of time reinventing the wheel the world over, everyone else more or less comes out with the same conclusion but we're so separate, it doesn't necessarily get passed along" (Interview 4). Each archivist spoke of times when that collaborative effort was extremely helpful in getting them past a particular situation or task.

To manage the day-to-day tasks involved with their specific jobs, solo archivists use the context of their institution to set big priorities and then move flexibly among the changing priorities of their everyday jobs, consulting resources such as guidelines and other archivists when needed. These two areas combine together over the lifecycle of a solo archivist's career, changing with career moves, adding in materials with experience, and flowing with the institution to become a strong intuitive sense which guides everyday task management. While it may appear that lone arrangers handle their challenging situations by just working, their experience working with priority setting and continuously adding resources to their arsenal allows them to develop this seemingly intangible quality.

That leads into the secondary research question which this study sought to address: *what does the daily decision-making process of a "lone arranger" look like in the real world?* Perhaps the first archivist interviewed said it best: it looks like a "balancing act" between all the different duties and priorities accumulated at and informed by the archivist's particular situation and context (Interview 1). It looks like managing these priorities and the intuition discussed above with an understanding of each archivist's personal disposition towards their work. It was interesting to hear how the tasks that the archivists

wished that they could get to were almost all things that they enjoyed doing - writing in depth metadata, spending more time on the 'detective' aspect of reference and processing, and more. A couple of the archivists in particular pointed out situations where they had to balance what they needed to do with what their instinct indicated they should do. "I can spend an hour looking for stuff on one single piece, but sometimes you just have to go 'there's nothing there, go on, go to the next thing,' and that's kind of the hardest part is to know when to stop looking and just get it done and go on to the next thing, cause I'm a researcher" (Interview 5). With the other interviewees, this balance was more of an implied fact. All decision making required that balance, not just restrictions based on institutional resources or missions. Keeping in check the desire to follow the rabbit trail of a particular manuscript or spend a lot of time on super descriptive metadata is an important part of the lone arranger's daily process.

## Conclusion

This study painted an interesting picture of the daily management practices of solo archivists as well as the world in which these lone arrangers operate. Hopefully, the findings both from the literature and from the research provide information for those who may not know much about the lone arrangers and act as a source of encouragement for the archivists themselves. While they face multiple challenges that are not unique to archives but are compounded in the context of the lone arranger, these archivists still manage a large amount of the nations' heritage. And how? The study showed that lone arrangers manage the day-to-day tasks involved in their jobs by setting priorities, consulting resources, and balancing the needs of their situation with their own personal inclinations.

Over the course of this study, a few questions were raised which were not in the purview of the research questions, but which I believe are important to consider going forward. One of the archivists interviewed did not have any prior education or training aside from that which she received on the job. Finding resources was particularly difficult for this archivist, leading me to wonder - whose responsibility is it to ensure that these lone arrangers have the resources that they need? Not folders and boxes, but guidelines, best practice articles, and books of advice. Is that solely the prerogative of the institution where the archive is located, which may have very little understanding of what is required for the archivist, or should SAA have resources available for persons in those



situations? The aforementioned archivist indicated that she would only know about and utilize a resource if she learned about it from another archivist or through the Lone Arrangers Section Listserv. There are issues with expecting the archivist themselves to find these materials or the organization in which they operate to provide them. As has already been discussed, lone arrangers have time constraints which restrict their ability to spend time looking for these types of resources, and a lack of formal training in library science can make that process take even longer, as is the case with this particular archivist. The institutions, on the other hand, do not necessarily understand the processes of archives enough to know what information and help their employees need to properly perform their job duties. I think that this is a conversation which is important for those in the Lone Arranger Section and larger SAA body to consider in thinking about how it provides support for all archivists across the country.

For the Lone Arrangers Section in particular, based on what I was told by the interviewed archivists I recommend attempting to compile organized lists of references similar to LibGuides at universities. Reference lists and glossaries of technical terms were both mentioned as resources which solo archivists would like to see, especially when it comes to topics which frequently come up on the Lone Arrangers Section Listserv. Additionally, multiple interviewees mentioned a desire to see more specialized versions of the Lone Arrangers Section. After all, there are other sections such as University Archives, Government Archives, Business Archives, etc., and all of these types of institutions also have lone arranger counterparts participating in SAA. Because of the collaborative nature of the solo archivist in turning to that comrade down the road, having perhaps these types

of subsections within the Lone Arrangers might help to put archivists in similar situations in better, closer contact, at least virtually.

Finally, I think that this study has implications for the classrooms in which future Lone Arrangers are being educated. In general, I think that more acknowledgment of the reality of the solo archivists within the classroom environment would be helpful in preparing the next generation. The classroom tends to be a place where the “best practice” ideas and situations are taught without much acknowledgment of the difficult context of the small archive. Going off of the findings, an emphasis on the importance of both setting and interpreting the mission of the institution in practicing archives and records management would prepare future archivists not only for the general archival field, but especially for the context of the lone arranger, should they end up in that position. The informed intuition which drives the management practices of lone arrangers is a specialized ability, but one which can be developed and can be prepared for with an open mind and determined practice.

## Bibliography

- Dow, E. (1997). EAD and the small repository. *The American Archivist*, 60(4), 446–455. doi:10.17723/aarc.60.4.83n2005k00n27411.
- Hackmann, W. (1968). Small college archives: problems and solutions. *The American Archivist*, 31(3), 271–275. doi:10.17723/aarc.31.3.g5p8h4683h367663.
- Pevar, S. (2005). Success as a lone arranger: setting priorities and getting the job done. *Journal of Archival Organization*, 3(1), 51–60. doi:10.1300/J201v03n01\_05.
- Williams, J. A., & Berilla, E. M. (2015). Minutes, migration, and migraines: establishing a digital archives at a small institution. *The American Archivist*, 78(1), 84–95. doi:10.17723/0360-9081.78.1.84.
- Wosh, P., & Yakel, E. (1992). Smaller archives and professional development: some new york stories. *The American Archivist*, 55(3), 474–482. doi:10.17723/aarc.55.3.rm3162605j570413.
- Baird, D., & Coles, L. M. (1998). *A Manual for small archives*. Vancouver, B.C.: Association of British Columbia Archivists, 1988.: Association of British Columbia Archivists.
- Carmicheal, D. W. (2012). *Organizing archival records* (3rd ed.). Walnut Creek, Calif: AltaMira Press: AltaMira Press.
- Dow, E. (1997). EAD and the small repository. *The American Archivist*, 60(4), 446–455. doi:10.17723/aarc.60.4.83n2005k00n27411
- Fisher, R. (2009). In Search of a Theory of Private Archives: The Foundational Writings of Jenkinson and Schellenberg Revisited. *Archivaria*, 67, 1–24.
- Greene, M., & Meissner, D. (2005). More product, less process: revamping traditional archival processing. *The American Archivist*, 68(2), 208–263. doi:10.17723/aarc.68.2.c741823776k65863
- Hackmann, W. (1968). Small college archives: problems and solutions. *The American Archivist*, 31(3), 271–275. doi:10.17723/aarc.31.3.g5p8h4683h367663
- Jimerson, R. (2013). Archivists and social responsibility: A response to mark greene. *The*

*American Archivist*, 76(2), 335–345. doi:10.17723/aarc.76.2.2627p15350572t21

Jimerson, R. C. (2000). Book Review: American Archival Studies: Readings in Theory and Practice. *Archivaria*, 51.

Koch, G. (2004). Challenges to a small ethnographic archives. In A. Seeger & C. Chaudhuri (Eds.), *Archives for the future: Global perspectives on audiovisual archives in the 21st century* (pp. 170–182). Calcutta, India: Seagull Books.

Manning, M., & Silva, J. (2012). Dual Archivist/Librarians: Balancing the Benefits and Challenges of Diverse Responsibilities. *College and Research Libraries*, 73(2), 164–181.

McFarland, C. (2007). Rethinking the Business of Small Archives. *Archival Issues*, 31(2), 137–149.

Millar, L. (2002). The Death of the Fonds and the Resurrection of Provenance: Archival Context in Space and Time. *Archivaria*, 53.

Pevar, S. (2005). Success as a lone arranger: setting priorities and getting the job done. *Journal of Archival Organization*, 3(1), 51–60. doi:10.1300/J201v03n01\_05

Robyns, M., & Woolman, J. (2011). Institutional Functional Analysis at Northern Michigan University: A New Process of Appraisal and Arrangement of Archival Records. *The American Archivist*, 74.

Williams, J. A., & Berilla, E. M. (2015). Minutes, migration, and migraines: establishing a digital archives at a small institution. *The American Archivist*, 78(1), 84–95. doi:10.17723/0360-9081.78.1.84

Wosh, P., & Yakel, E. (1992). Smaller archives and professional development: some new york stories. *The American Archivist*, 55(3), 474–482. doi:10.17723/aarc.55.3.rm3162605j570413

Zamon, C. (2012). *The lone arranger: Succeeding in a small repository*. Chicago: Society of American Archivists.

## Appendices

### Appendix A: Recruitment Letter

Members of the Lone Arrangers Section,

My name is Lauren Murphree, and I am a student at UNC-SILS working on my master's paper for graduation in May 2018. I am focusing on the practices of archivists at small institutional archives, as I would like to explore how archivists in such situations, with various limited resources, approach the many different types of tasks which face them.

Earlier this school year, in September, I sent out an email asking if anyone was interested in taking part in this study. I received over forty responses, which was incredibly encouraging - thank you so much, Lone Arrangers! Since then, I have completed my literature review and planning and am ready to move on to the next stage. If you did not see my email or did not get a chance to reply, please indicate your interest to me quickly. Participation in this study would require filling out a short survey with the potential to be selected for an interview, which would be audio-recorded. It's thanks to the amazing response that I even have to take that step!

I am so excited to speak with members of this section and hear about what you are doing - and how you are doing it - in your positions as solo archivists. If you are interested in taking part or just learning more about what I am working on, please email me at [lmurphree28@gmail.com](mailto:lmurphree28@gmail.com). Thank you for taking time to read this email, and I hope that my study can be useful for this section.

Sincerely,

Lauren Murphree  
MLIS 2018  
Research Assistant  
UNC Health Sciences Library

## Appendix B: Recruitment Letter Follow-Up

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

Thank you so much for your reply to my recruitment letter expressing interest in the research I am doing as part of my graduate degree in library science at the University of North Carolina – Chapel Hill.

The purpose of this research study is to explore the management practices of solo archivists in order to add to a small body of literature and make the voices of solo archivists heard in the archival community. You are being asked to take part in a research study because you are a solo archivist who has expressed interest in supporting this study.

Being in a research study is completely voluntary. You can choose not to be in this research study. You can also say yes now and change your mind later.

If you agree to take part in this research, you will be asked to take an initial survey. Your participation in this study will take between fifteen minutes and two hours. If you agree to take part in this research, you will be asked to take an initial survey. Your participation in this study will take between fifteen minutes and two hours. The initial survey should take no more than fifteen minutes to complete. *Please respond to this email to receive the survey. Responding to this email will be regarded as consent.*

If you are selected for and agree to an interview, participation in this portion will take about an hour, with the potential to extend depending the discussion and your availability and willingness to continue. We expect that forty people will take part in the initial survey, with eight to ten being chosen for interviews. The interviews will be audio-recorded unless you do not wish to have your interview recorded. Consent will be confirmed verbally on record.

You can choose not to answer any question you do not wish to answer. You can also choose to stop taking the survey at any time. You must be at least 18 years old to participate. If you are younger than 18 years old, please stop now.

The possible risks to you in taking part in this research are:

- In the unlikely event that confidentiality of data is lost, there is a risk of potential discomfort at having someone else find out that you were in a research study or what your views on archives are.

The possible benefits to you for taking part in this research are:

- Increased recognition in the archival community for the challenges facing solo archivists, potentially leading to the improvement of recommendations and support for solo archivists.

To protect your identity as a research subject, the researcher(s) will not share your information with anyone. In any publication about this research, your name or other private information will not be used.

Thank You,

Lauren Murphree  
MSLS 2018  
Research Assistant  
UNC Health Sciences Library

If you have any questions about this research, please contact the Investigator named above by calling 256-682-5970 or emailing [lem28@email.unc.edu](mailto:lem28@email.unc.edu). If you have questions or concerns about your rights as a research subject, you may contact the UNC Institutional Review Board at 919-966-3113 or by email to [IRB\\_subjects@unc.edu](mailto:IRB_subjects@unc.edu).

## Appendix C: Initial Survey

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Institution: \_\_\_\_\_

Position: \_\_\_\_\_

Type of Institution:

- ☐ Corporate
- ☐ Educational (associated with a university/college)
- ☐ Federal (national, state level)
- ☐ Local/Regional (county, city level)
- ☐ Collecting (museum, etc.)

Briefly describe your archive: how large is it, what is its area of focus, why do people come to your archive, etc.?

Who comprises your staff? (check all that apply)

- ☐ One archivist
- ☐ Two archivists
- ☐ Two+ archivists
- ☐ Paraprofessional staff (students, volunteers, part-time employees)

What is your degree of archival education? (check all that apply)

- ☐ MS, Library Science
- ☐ MA/MS, Archival Studies
- ☐ MA, History
- ☐ Master's Certificate, Archival Studies
- ☐ Certified Archivist (has completed and passed the Certified Archivist Exam)
- ☐ Informal Training on the Job



## Appendix D: Interview Questions

- Tell me a little bit about your archive: how big is it, who runs the archive, where does the funding come from, what is its area of focus, why do people come to your archive, etc.
- What are some of the challenges you face in your particular situation? (informed by survey)
- Tell me about a typical day in your job.
  - What are the main tasks that you have to do every day?
  - How much time do you normally spend on these tasks?
- How do you prioritize your tasks? What informs your prioritizing?
  - Are there any particular technologies you use to help you out?
- Would you say that you are more processing or user-oriented?
  - Or really, what is your ideal mindset and how do you think you are succeeding in carrying that out in your tasks?
- What literature have you found useful?
  - Do you want to see more literature discussing small archives?
- What experience do you have with grants?
  - Are they useful to you personally in your endeavors? Is it too much work on top of everything else or have you found that it is the only way to really get big projects done?
- How important is the public in how you manage your archive? (How do considerations for the public affect your management practices, both of yourself and of your archive?)
- Is the SAA Lone Arrangers section helpful?
- What about SAA workshops?
- Can you even make it to the SAA with funding?

## Appendix F: Resources for Lone Arrangers

Below are some of the resources specifically mentioned by the archivists interviewed over the course of this study.

### Books and Guidelines

*Archival and Special Collections Facilities Guidelines* by Thomas P. Wilsted and Michele F. Pacifico

- <https://www.amazon.com/Archival-Special-Collections-Facilities-Guidelines/dp/0838910629>

*Archives in the Digital Age: Standards, Policies and Tools* by Lina Bountouri

- <https://www.amazon.com/Archives-Digital-Age-Information-Professional/dp/1843347776>

*Describing Archives: A Content Standard (DACS), Second Edition*

- <https://www2.archivists.org/groups/technical-subcommittee-on-describing-archives-a-content-standard-dacs/dacs>

*The Lone Arranger: Succeeding in a Small Repository* by Christina Zamon

- [https://www.amazon.com/Lone-Arranger-Succeeding-Small-Repository/dp/0838958788/ref=sr\\_1\\_1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1522946362&sr=1-1&keywords=the+lone+arranger](https://www.amazon.com/Lone-Arranger-Succeeding-Small-Repository/dp/0838958788/ref=sr_1_1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1522946362&sr=1-1&keywords=the+lone+arranger)

### Online Resources

Yale Processing Estimator (From the Beinecke Rare Book Processing Manual)

- <http://beinecke.library.yale.edu/25-processing-estimates>

Yale Linear Footage Calculator

- <http://beinecke.library.yale.edu/linear-footage-calculator>

Preservation Self-Assessment Program

- <https://psap.library.illinois.edu/>

### Professional Associations

State Archives Associations

- <https://www2.archivists.org/assoc-orgs/directory>

Visual Resources Association

- <http://vraweb.org/>