Creating the Capacity to Aspire:

An Introductory Survey of Volunteers in Community Archives

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Abstract

Volunteers provide the essential combination of passion, dedication, imagination, work, and skills to bring community archives to fruition. These independent projects often require great emotional, physical, political, financial, and mental commitment from volunteers, and, as such, this personal sacrifice can be considered both an enormous benefit to the community archive but also a potential vulnerability with regard to long-term sustainability and succession. As archival scholars, practitioners, and cultural heritage funding agencies turn to studying community archives, sustainability, and infrastructure, more work devoted to understanding how volunteers exist in these contexts is needed.

This study aims to provide an introduction to volunteers in community archives by investigating the ways in which volunteers become engaged, examining their motivations, and by exploring the work they do and skills they employ in these vital community spaces. In order to construct a collective description of volunteers in community archives, this study employed semi-structured interviews with nine volunteers from five community archives in New York City, and the results were analyzed using qualitative content analysis research methods. In general, volunteers in community archives are highly skilled communicators, administrators, researchers, and curators who are motivated by a variety of different factors and who are able to take on a wide variety of flexible roles to meet the needs of their different organizational configurations.

Keywords: community archives, volunteers, sustainability, capacity building, volunteer motivations, nonprofit volunteers

Table of Contents

List of Tables

Chapter I: The Problem

Introduction

This study seeks to explore the roles and motivations of volunteers who contribute their time and efforts to alternative documentary heritage projects collectively known in archival scholarship as community archives. Community archives are independent, often grassroots, alternatives to mainstream institutional heritage repositories through which community members collect, describe, preserve, and manage the access of materials that are of enduring value to them. Roles within community archives often do not fall into the clearly defined categories, as are commonly found in mainstream heritage institutions such as government or university archives. Collectors and curators, community archivists and the users of community archives are often the same individuals. Many community archives are based around one or two key personal collections, with these collectors often being at the core of the organization providing much of the inspiration and drive.

Administratively, there are distinctions between those community archives that have a close working relationship with official bodies including mainstream institutions, accepting some or all of their funds from state or grant-giving sources, and those for whom the principles of community ownership—self-determination, autonomy, independence, and community control over representation—are central to their purpose and being. These administrative configurations play a role in how community members engage with each other and with the collections.

One of the consequences and dimensions of a commitment to independence and sustaining autonomy for community archives is the resulting dependence on the significant personal sacrifice of key activists and networks of volunteers. These projects require great emotional, physical, political, financial, and mental commitment from volunteers to the

collections as well as to each other as community members. This commitment is both an enormous benefit to the archive but also a potential vulnerability with regard to its long-term sustainability and succession. Yet, these projects are thriving with a number of engaged volunteers.

To date, there is limited research that has been published surveying volunteers in community archives about their own volunteer experiences. There have been several case studies published on community archives and archival theory, philosophy, activism, and diversification of the historical record. However, there has been little published on the reciprocal impact of volunteers and community archives, including their motivations and their work. This study seeks to help fill that knowledge gap, to build a more detailed picture of the work that community archives do and the impacts they have on the lives of those who volunteer in them.

This work is also informed by personal experiences of the author. Over a fourteen-month period from 2015-2016, this author devoted many hours of volunteer service to the *My Baryo, My Borough* project, a community-based arts and oral history project that partnered with Queens Memory, the Queens Library's local history project, to document Filipino and Filipino-American communities in Queens, New York (Schreiner & De Los Reyes, 2016). For this project, the author helped to organize and perform intensive local outreach to the Filipino community in Queens, including facilitating intergenerational workshops and staging public events in collaboration with Queens Memory around narrative and storytelling in order to form substantial relationships with oral history interviewees and their families. After gathering the oral histories, this author went on to process the collection materials for the Queens Library Archives, including cataloging images and audio files, audio clip editing, and the creation of finding aids for public access to the collections. Inspired by this first-hand experience but also surprised by

the crucial roles that she and other volunteers played in completing this project, this author has been persuaded to "document the documenters," or to document volunteer experiences of community archive projects in New York City.

Background of the Problem

In order to understand how volunteers impact and are impacted by community archives, it is crucial to discuss aspects of the diverse perspectives that community archives represent. Community archives can be formed around ethnic, racial and religious identity, gender and sexual identity, economic class, and geographic location. Community identity may be based on geography or common interests (such as ethnicity, religion, lifestyle, or other factors), and these archives may be founded by engaged members of a community of interest, often starting with a personal collection. Materials stewarded by community archives vary widely and may even include non-traditional archival materials, such as objects, books, ephemera, clothes as well as more traditional documents, photographs, and audio-visual materials, including oral histories. In many cases, the community archive houses materials created by the members themselves.

These collections can be located in their own independent physical space or brought together in a virtual archive, or perhaps more typically in some sort of hybrid arrangement. Those with a totally digital presence have implemented a post-custodial approach, in which contributors retain their original documents and materials, while only the digital surrogates become part of the collection and are made accessible through an online public access catalog (Schreiner & De Los Reyes, 2016). They may also be located *within* mainstream institutions, such as academic archives or local libraries, and are usually housed as "special collections," due to the special context under which the materials are gathered, organized, and made accessible.

Community archives are found all over the world. In 2009, Jeannette Bastian and Ben Alexander published the edited volume *Community Archives: The Shaping of Memory*, a collection of thirteen essays, each presenting a case study of community archive projects, geographically dispersed from Europe and the Americas to the South Pacific and the Caribbean. These projects represented a wide spectrum of institutional structures, including grassroots documentation efforts. A partial listing of the communities represented in this volume shows this variety: black culture in London, the West Yorkshire area of England, the native Noongar Claim region of Western Australia, American medical students, the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians, the people of St. Kitts, Canadian lesbians and gays, Bosnian refugees, former leprosy patients on a Philippine island, and Grateful Dead fans.

As recently as October 2016 to October 2017, the Institute of Museum and Library Services' National Forum Grants program supported a series of collaborative forums for independent community archives in the United States called *Diversifying the Digital Historical Record: Integrating Community Archives in National Strategies for Access to Digital Cultural Heritage* (Caswell & Jules, 2017). The forums provided a platform for independent projects to share their strategies for addressing representation and sustainability as well as a public space for critical conversations about cultural heritage, including the digital. A list of the participating community archives and organizations reveal a wide ranging and geographically diverse group, located across the United States, including the Amistad Research Center at Tulane University, the Shorefront Legacy Center, the South Asian American Digital Archive (SADAA), ONE Archives Foundation, A People's Archive of Police Violence in Cleveland, and the Houma Language Project, among many others (Caswell & Jules, 2017, Organizations section).

In New York City, a myriad array of community archives are found throughout the five boroughs, and the following is by no means an exhaustive list: the Queens Historical Society, the Bronx County Historical Society, Bayside Historical Society, Weeksville Heritage Center, Queens Memory Project, Center for Puerto Rican Studies at Hunter College, Asian American Arts Centre, Lesbian Herstory Archives, Interference Archive, Redstockings Archive, Occupy Wall Street Archives, La MaMa ETC Archives, ARChive of Contemporary Music, Green-Wood Cemetery Archives, and the Center for Migration Studies Archives on Staten Island, among many more independent archival heritage projects. Each is unique, founded at different times for different reasons with their own specific approaches to collecting, describing, preserving, and providing accessibility. By documenting the histories of particular groups and localities on their own terms, community archives and their volunteers make invaluable and vital contributions to the preservation of a more inclusive and diverse local and national heritage.

Challenges to sustainability. Due to the independent nature of community archives, most are nonprofit organizations that face many challenges of sustainability in both the short and long-term. While this independence provides the necessary autonomy over the collections that community archives wish to sustain, it can be a source of tension for traditional archivists who see such a setup as antithetical to the long-term orientation that they associate with the concept of "archive" (Gilliland & Flinn, 2013).

Community archives' life cycle challenges in the long-term. Archival scholars Andrew Flinn, Mary Stevens, Elizabeth Shepherd, (2009) and Rebecka Sheffield (2017) have all suggested that community archives move through a life cycle: when a community, social movement or group matures, declines, or becomes no longer as socially relevant, it finds that it can no longer sustain—or no longer wishes to sustain—its archives as an independent,

autonomous activity. That is often the point when a hand-off occurs to a mainstream archive. For a mainstream archivist, taking on a community archive at the end of its life cycle means also acknowledging that they are not the only relevant authorities over the materials, and that community knowledge and expertise will also be important skills to acquire. As Sheffield (2017) notes, this may require mainstream archivists to negotiate new policies and to potentially develop community protocols with considerable sensitivity.

Self-Reported challenges in the short-term. Through semi-structured interviews with seventeen community archive founders, staff, and volunteers at twelve Southern California community archives, researchers found that respondents reported serious concerns around sustainability due to lack of funding, personnel, space, and access to resources. Some projects relied entirely on volunteers, while others depended on a small paid staff. The precarious financial situation of volunteers, concerns with funding, and lack of space have motivated many community archives to consider partnerships on various scales with larger institutions (Zavala, Migoni, Caswell, Geraci, & Cifor, 2017).

Community archives may receive public or private funding for their activities, but such funding is frequently project-based and is rarely sustained or focused on capacity building or organizational development. The continual lack of regular capital and revenue funding has implications for physical resources including IT, preservation, storage and dissemination, and for the development of permanent staff to steward the archive. It can also be an additional challenge to locate funding to sustain the archive to ensure that the agendas of the funding agencies do not conflict with the community's aims and objectives (Gilliland & Flinn, 2013).

Statement of the Problem Situation

A considerable number of community archives are thriving with a substantial amount of engaged volunteers. However, since community archives are conceptualized outside, and indeed distinct from, mainstream archival institutions, their organizational structures cannot be described in the same way; existing literature on volunteerism as applied to mainstream institutions can therefore have limited applicability to community archives. Yet while the case studies that constitute much of the scholarship on community archives often discuss their own specific organizational structures, it can be difficult to discern how generalizable findings on infrastructure and organization can be to other community archive practitioners in the field, especially due to the intense specialization of community archive structures.

Complicating any attempts at generalizations, personal and individual dimensions associated with many community archives are also important and common factors to their organization. As Flinn et al. (2009) notes, "the point at which the personal becomes institutional is not always entirely clear" (p. 79). In addition, unlike formal heritage institutions, there may be significant overlap among the archives' staff, volunteers, and community of users. It is important to reiterate that community archives represent a wide-ranging variety of projects that range from entirely independent, permanent, 501(c)(3) nonprofit organizations, to those having a close working relationship with mainstream institutions, to informal, loosely defined, temporary configurations of dedicated community members. Indeed, as Caswell and Jules (2017) note in their whitepaper for *Diversifying the Digital Historical Record* forum, the label "*community archives* can be seen as an external imposition by archival studies scholars rather than emerging organically from within such community efforts" (p. 3). Variables including the personal and individual dimensions of community members, availability of resources, and ideological

inclinations such as cultural or political values all contribute to the configuration of a community

archive at certain points in time.

Purpose of the Study

This study aims to explore how and why volunteers join community archives as well as

the work they perform in support of the community archive. It intends to ascertain the various

ways in which volunteers initially hear about the community archive and how they come to be

involved, including the ways in which other community service work or existing social

relationships interact with their work for the community archives. In addition, the study seeks to

discuss the type of work undertaken by volunteers, related to their contributions, training, and

projects for the community archive.

Conceptual or Substantive Assumptions

The study assumes that community archives—as independent, often grassroots,

projects—all require some form of volunteer service and structure in order to be sustainable. It

also assumes that volunteers provide an important source of labor for these projects and that their

contributions are crucial to the operations of the community archives.

Research Questions

This study attempts to not only document the work contributions of volunteers but also

seeks to uncover volunteer motivations and paths to engagement. The following research

questions were identified as important aspects for the study:

1: How do volunteers become engaged with community archives?

2: Why do volunteers become engaged with community archives?

3: What kind of work do volunteers perform in their activities for community archives?

4: What types of skills do volunteers employ in their activities for community archives?

Importance of the Study

Community archives greatly add to the diversification of the historical record, and part of their impact can be measured by exploring present volunteer outcomes. Although community archiving varies considerably across different settings and cultural contexts, this study will provide a greater understanding of volunteer motivations, their work, and how their roles function within different configurations of community archives.

For those community archives that have a close working relationship with mainstream institutions, this study may be useful to practitioners in the field interested in volunteer recruitment, outcomes, and sustainability. It may be of interest to project leaders, community engagement practitioners, community archivists, public historians, and public librarians who would like to better understand volunteer motivations and who would like to support positive volunteer outcomes.

For autonomous archive practitioners, this study may provide a greater understanding of their volunteer work in the context of other volunteers in different community archive environments. In addition, this study may be useful for individuals or groups who are considering starting their own community archive, particularly by providing a comparative view of the different ways community archives are configured. As archival scholars, practitioners, and cultural heritage funding agencies turn to studying community archives, sustainability, and infrastructure, this work may add to the understanding of how volunteers exist in these vital community spaces.

Chapter II: Review of the Related Literature

Overview

This section provides a brief history of the community archives movement in the United

States, Canada, and the United Kingdom, where community archiving practices have received

the most attention from scholars and practitioners. This chapter will review current frameworks

and scholarly research approaches to the study of community archives as well as different

surveys and reports conducted on volunteer participation in the nonprofit and cultural sectors.

Brief History of the Community Archives Movement

Although local historical societies, churches, and regional museums have been collecting

community records for more than a century, the marked growth in community archives outside

of these organizations did not occur until the mid-1970s and early 1980s (Sheffield, 2017).

Gilliland and Flinn (2013) suggest that this increase in community collecting was partly in

response to emerging social history approaches and resulting protest cycles of the 1960s, which

included antiwar, feminist, civil rights, gay, and student activism which challenged established

institutions and long-held social structures. At the annual meeting of the Society of American

Archivists in 1970, Howard Zinn delivered a provocative speech that challenged archival

neutrality, and Sheffield (2017) credits this moment as a galvanizing force for archivists to

consider their complicity in reproducing heritage more concerned with nation building than with

representing a multiplicity of voices and experiences (Zinn, 1977, p. 20). In addition, during this

time, the rise of oral history and public history also contributed to growth of community

archives, as affordable portable tape recorders became readily available.

In Canada, the Canadian Gay Archives, now the Canadian Lesbian and Gay Archives

(CLGA), was incorporated as a stand-alone organization in 1980, and, around the same time, in

New York, the Lesbian Herstory Archives (LHA) also became one of the earliest queer non-profits when they incorporated as the Lesbian Herstory Educational Foundation in 1979 (Thistlethwaite, 2000). In response to police raids which resulted in the removal of several boxes of archival material without explanation or recourse, CLGA sought legal action to incorporate and show evidence that archives could not only be extensions of private organizations or churches, but that they could also exist as independent organizations, such as neighborhood historical collections (Sheffield, 2017). In the United Kingdom, the government provided considerable investment in community archives and technological initiatives to spur job creation and skills exchange designed to prepare society for the knowledge economy during the 1980s and 1990s. In 2005, the Community Archives Development Group (CADG), later called the Community Archives Heritage Group (CAHG), was established with government funding in the U.K. to build capacity for all community archives at the national level. As of 2017, they list almost six hundred community archives and heritage organizations in their directory (Gilliland & Flinn, 2013).

In the United States, since the 2000s, a number of projects have taken advantage of digital technologies to connect communities to local collections, which can transcend geographic and temporal boundaries. Michelle Caswell's (2014) work on the South Asian American Digital Archive (SAADA), Natalie Milbrodt and Maggie Schreiner's (2018) work on the Queens Memory Project (QMP) as well as other community archives have employed post-custodial practices, in which materials from community members are digitized for the archives' collection and then returned to their donors. In addition, in response to the large amount of digital and born-digital materials already available, there have been efforts to bring together dispersed, existing digital records online with what Ricardo Punzalan (2014) calls "virtual reunification." There are

also projects that have partnered with community archives, artists, activists, and individuals to lower barriers to preserving community or personal collections. In doing so, they foster a community of support for archiving and access through education, research, and cultural engagement. For example, XFR Collective collaborates with such parties to provide low-cost digitization services for the preservation of at-risk audiovisual media (XFR Collective, 2018). In 2007, a group of Indigenous Australians, the Warumungu, collaborated with Kim Christen and Craig Dietrich to develop the Mukurtu Wumpurrarni-kari Archive, using Waramungu-defined protocols for digital heritage materials based on community needs and values. Mukurtu CMS is now an open source platform designed with diverse communities in mind who want to manage and share their digital cultural heritage in their own way, on their own terms.

Some Frameworks for Understanding Community Archives

In order to help scholars and practitioners better understand the origins of community archives and the context within which volunteers are found, Rebecka Sheffield's (2017) work provides useful frameworks drawn from interdisciplinary literature. These frameworks are summarized below. It should be noted that boundaries between each framework are fluid and imprecise and a community archive may exhibit elements of more than one simultaneously. These frameworks are also changing and the explanations below are not meant to be an exhaustive list.

Local history societies. According to Fiona Cosson (2017), local historical societies are often left outside the "politics of the archive" discussions, in which archival repositories are seen as sites of agency and power (p. 45). Given that there are plenty of small, private archives sitting in homes, computer hard drives, and church halls, these types of archival repositories should not be dismissed. In her article, "The Small Politics of Everyday Life" published in the peer-

reviewed journal *Archives and Records*, Casson (2017) suggests that local history archive collections can shed light on the everyday lives of working-class people in Britain by detailing the "small politics" of people's lives—family, work, leisure, and beliefs. They give ordinary people a life lived, and play a significant role in rescuing and preserving archival collections, and in creating and curating their own histories.

Autonomous archives. In 2010, Canadian archivist Shaunna Moore and interdisciplinary scholar Susan Pell first theorized the concept of "autonomous archives" by conducting case studies on three archives that have emerged within marginalized communities in Vancouver, Canada: the Union of British Columbia Indian Chiefs Archives, the Hope in Shadows Archive, and Friends of the Woodward's Squat Archive. Whether focused on land claims by First Nations or to contest the mainstream representation of Downtown Eastside, Vancouver's poorest neighborhood, autonomous archives are consciously conceptualized as efforts to bring together evidence to support critiques of dominant historical narratives. Through their research, Moore and Pell (2010) found that autonomous archives were all constituted at the intersections of social identity, claims to place, and the political stakes of representation.

Participatory and DIY archives. The participatory archives model was first articulated by Isto Huvila (2008) to describe the way individuals can actively participate in the creation of shared heritage. Huvila (2008) draws on the concept of participatory culture in direct opposition to consumer culture. DIY, or "Do-It-Yourself," refers self-creative endeavors that produce pleasure in ways that consumption of mass-produced goods does not. As Sheffield (2017) notes, "They take the making out of the heritage industry and back into the community context where people are doing, feeling, creating, and experiencing the world in their own ways" (Sheffield, 2017, p. 366). DIY archives celebrate the crafting spirit, often in resistance to government or

commercial intervention, and this inherent counterculture motivation makes them both exciting

and vulnerable. As members of the community lose interest in the collection or decide that

housing it is no longer feasible, the question of passing custody on and the possible integration

with a mainstream heritage institution becomes an issue.

Community archives as Social Movement Organizations (SMOs). Rebecka

Sheffield's (2017) work on community archives draws on interdisciplinary scholarship on social

movements. SMOs gather otherwise disparate resources for the purposes of engaging in action to

promote social change. They focus not on issues of materialistic qualities such as economic well-

being but on issues related to collective identities and human rights. Community archives, which

both preserve and provide material tools necessary for the construction of collective identity, are

fundamental to sustaining a movement. They provide the intellectual lineage and make possible

the social cohesion necessary for social movements to develop shared heritages that strengthen

otherwise loose ties among members. Sheffield (2017) suggests that community archives as

SMOs can provide a space to preserve networks of social movement actors and knowledge of

movement histories, tactics, and goals during movement abeyance, or when social movements

enter a period of decline. As SMOs, community archives can be sites for sustaining social

movement continuity and revitalization

Scholarly Research on Community Archives

Although churches and local history societies have been collecting community records

for more than a century, the topic of community archives as a theoretical practice remained

largely at the margins of archival scholarly work. Then, in the early 2000s, a series of studies

were published that examined the relationship among archives, communities, and collective

memory. In 2003, Jeannette Bastian, professor and Director of Archives Management at

Simmons College, published *Owning Memory: How a Caribbean Community Lost Its Archives and Found Its History*. Based on her dissertation work and former experience as Territorial Librarian of the United States Virgin Islands from 1987 to 1998, her case study examines the efforts of Virgin Islanders to rebuild their "house of memory" (Bastian, 2003, p.13). With its history as a former colony of Denmark and now a United States territory, the historical records of the Virgin Islands reside primarily in Denmark and the United States. As a result, Virgin Islanders have had limited access to the primary sources of their history, and this has affected both their ability to write their own history and to construct their collective memory.

In this study, Bastian introduced the concept of "community of records," which refers to a community as both a "record-creating and as a memory frame that contextualizes the records it creates" (Bastian, 2003, p. 3). This notion has been picked up and expanded on in subsequent works. Archival scholars Andrew Flinn, Mary Stevens, and Elizabeth Shepherd (2009) at the University of College London (UCL) describe the emotional resonance that documentary heritage materials can provide for independent community archives in the United Kingdom, and Randall Jimerson (2007) expands this notion by suggesting that ethnocultural groups, gays and lesbians, and others have created their own archives to maintain custody over their own documentary heritage and to manage access and interpretation. In the early 1990s, Canadian archival scholar, Terry Cook (1994) critically challenged the concept of the archival fonds through a post-custodial lens, most notably articulating a turn in archival scholarship from "archives" as a collection or location to "archiving as practice" (Cook, 1994, p. 320). Some of these issues came together as a series of essays co-edited by Bastian and Ben Alexander. Published in 2009, *Community Archives: The Shaping of Memory*, is considered by many

scholars to be the first collection of scholarly works concerned specifically with community archives (Bastian & Alexander, 2009).

In 2008, the U.K. Arts and Humanities Research Council funded a major study by UCL researchers to investigate how community archives contribute to a multicultural society and how these organizations could be better supported by professional archivists (Flinn, Stevens, & Shepherd, 2009). During the twenty-month project, UCL researchers employed an ethnographic approach using open participatory observation with four community archives with activist roots: Future Histories, rukus!, Moroccan Memories, and Eastside Community Heritage. Their researchers sought an insider, bottom-up perspective on each archive by working with and within those community archives who had agreed to be involved in the study (Flinn et al., 2009). In the final report, Flinn, Stevens, and Shepherd (2009) recognized the growing interest in community archives as a "new and rich source" of heritage material and documented the significant collaborations between community archives and professionals to preserve, catalog, and make accessible community collections.

The UCL study has produced several scholarly articles and presentations related to the community archives movement in the United Kingdom and issues related to collecting, custody, and professionalism. Flinn, Stevens, and Shepherd (2009) suggested that mainstream archives need to develop flexible, sensitive relationships with community archives that will ensure long-term preservation by allowing communities to retain custody of their records. In addition, the UCL team also published a chapter in Bastian and Alexander's *Community Archives: The Shaping of Memory* (Flinn & Stevens, 2009), while rukus! founders Ajamu X and Topher Campbell appear in *Archivaria*'s 2009 special issue on queer archives (X, Campbell, & Stevens, 2009). Today, case studies about community archives continue to be published in peer-reviewed

journals together with articles intended for professional archivists, such as *Archives &*

Manuscripts, *Archivaria*, *Archival Science*, and *The American Archivist*.

   Aspirational & symbolic power of community archives. Another wave of scholarly

interest in community archives has developed out of the interdisciplinary fields of cultural

studies, postcolonialism studies, critical theory, feminist studies, and diaspora studies. Cultural

theorist and political activist, Stuart Hall (2001) writes of the foundational power of archives to

recognize the existence of previously unexplored histories. Cultural anthropologist, Arjun

Appadurai (2003) builds on the work of *Imagined Communities*, Benedict Anderson's (1983)

highly influential study of the origins of nationalism and social imagination. Appadurai claims

that an archives is an "intervention" and is "itself an aspiration rather than a recollection." It is

the "material site of the collective will to remember" (Appadurai, 2003, para. 7). Community

archiving, then, is not just about collecting records, but it is also a political project that

legitimizes a group's experiences and is a creative expression of the values of the group.

   This is seen most clearly in community archives with activist roots. As early as 1991,

Polly Thistlethwaite published her chapter, "The Lesbian Herstory Archives: A Case Study," in

Ellen Greenblatt and Cal Gough's edited volume, *Gay and Lesbian Library Service.* Having

served as coordinator and caretaker of the archives during the 1980s and 1990s, Thistlethwaite

describes the Lesbian Herstory Archives (LHA) as both a reparative space as well as a site of

resistance to the everyday traumas of sexism and homophobia (Thistlethwaite, 1991). In their

2015 article published in the peer-reviewed journal *Archival Science*, Alycia Sellie, Jesse

Goldstein, Molly Fair, & Jennifer Hoyer (2015) present the case study of Interference Archive

(IA), based in Brooklyn, New York, as an "activist archive" (p. 453). They distinguish between

collections in traditional institutions that archive activism, such as the Tamiment Library at New

York University, and "activist archives," such as IA, in that the former does not require ongoing community involvement. In contrast to the traditional view of archives as permanent structures documenting the past, Sellie et. al (2015) argue that activist archives may be temporary in nature due partially to their fluid interaction with political movements and resistance to the constraints, such as access, that mainstream institutions would require (Sellie et. al, 2015).

Volunteerism in mainstream libraries & archives. The use of volunteers in mainstream archival and library institutions is common practice and generally reflects a welcome exchange of labor in return for occupational experience. With technological changes, evolving information needs, and declining administrative budgets, mainstream institutions must reassess whether it is advantageous to incorporate volunteer programs at all and address issues such as volunteer demographics, motivation, management, work tasks, and reward and recognition. The volunteer internship, connecting the archive to students of a formal curricular program, is well established as key mechanism in training new practitioners. Volunteer programs administered in permanent repositories which employ permanent staff are structured around internships or apprenticeships, with volunteer labor not meant to displace permanent staff.

Nicol & Johnson's (2008) study of volunteers in libraries discussed some of the advantages and disadvantages of instituting a volunteer program in public libraries. After conducting a literature review survey of published materials on volunteers in public libraries, their findings suggest that volunteers provide an essential connection to the community, involving personal contact with the community (Nicol & Johnson, 2008). With an emphasis on the volunteer recruiting process, Nicol & Johnson (2008) recommend contact areas for volunteer recruitment, including service club meetings, parent teacher organization meetings, religious organizations, and local Chamber of Commerce meetings. Although this article is helpful for its

reevaluation of volunteers in libraries with an emphasis on community networking, first-person accounts from volunteers themselves are lacking.

In his article from the peer-reviewed *Journal of Library Administration*, Kevin B. Leonard (2012), a university archivist, reviews both the benefits and the costs to institutions and individuals in an exchange of volunteer archival labor for occupational experience. In comparison to community archives, there is a hierarchical structure to training, in which volunteers and interns are given "basic tasks," and this "allows experienced and trained staff to focus their own efforts on higher order, complex assignments" (Leonard, 2012, p. 315).

Beyond the obvious labor benefits, Leonard (2012) lists many other benefits of employing volunteers in mainstream archives. They can bring valuable outside knowledge to an archive. As an outsider with expertise gleaned from another area of endeavor, they can see things differently than entrenched staff and may be more willing to question long-established routines. Volunteers also can add special skills to an archive including, for example, foreign language fluency or useful technological proficiency (Leonard, 2012). So, volunteers are useful in another context because they can offer new perspectives and valuable personal skills and attributes.

Volunteerism in the nonprofit sector. Given the grassroots and individual dimension of community archives, it is more appropriate to discuss the role of volunteers in community archives from an interdisciplinary and nonprofit perspective, rather than from a mainstream archival framework. Dedicated to furthering or advocating for a particular social cause, nonprofits are constituted as independent organizations constituted to meet a social need not addressed by governmental institutions. As such, nonprofit organizations are accountable to the donors, funders, volunteers, program recipients, and the public community, rather than to shareholders. From the late 1990s to the mid-2000s, a series of studies were published which

attempted to examine volunteer motivations and involvement in nonprofits from both a psychological and an administrative perspective.

Individual psychology and volunteers. Published by the peer-reviewed *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* in 1998, a research team of psychologists from various American universities set out to study the motivations that may lead individuals to seek out volunteer opportunities, to commit themselves, and to sustain their involvement in volunteerism over extended periods of time (Clary, Ridge, Stukas, Snyder, Copeland, Haugen, & Miene, 1998). Funded by grants from the Aspen Institute's Nonprofit Sector Research Fund, the National Science Foundation, and the National Institute of Mental Health, Clary et al. (1998) developed an instrument designed to measure functions served by volunteerism, the Volunteer Functions Inventory (VFI). The VFI is configured as a 30-item questionnaire divided into 6 scales of 5 items each, which is scored using a 7-point Likert-type scale. The six motivations being assessed are "values" (expressions of altruism), "understanding" (acquiring or improving knowledge, skills, experiences), "social," "career," "protective" (protecting the ego or escaping from problems), and "enhancement" (motivations centered on self-knowledge and feeling better about oneself). In this wide-ranging study involving hundreds of participants, the article describes six sub-studies in total: the first set of three is concerned with the construction of the VFI, investigations into the factor structure, and assessment of reliability; while the second set of three concerns validation using the VFI to test hypotheses in the context of different stages of the volunteer process (recruitment, satisfaction, and commitment).

Using a functional approach to behavioral attitudes, Clary et al. (1998) assert that although specific volunteer activities may seem identical among individuals, the motivations for doing them may be very different. A volunteer may be motivated by different motivations

simultaneously, and these motivations may change over time. The resulting VFI is an example of how psychologists think about, classify, and measure volunteer motivations. The studies reveal that motivations may guide the agendas that people pursue as volunteers, not only by moving people to volunteer but also by defining what features of the volunteer experience will constitute satisfaction and continued commitment. Although Clary et al.'s (1998) study is not a sustained investigation of a particular kind of volunteering, it does provide an empirical framework into ongoing, planned, helping behavior.

Organizational psychology and volunteers. In contrast to the psychometric analysis of individual volunteer motivations undertaken by Clary et al. (1998), Nesbit, Christiansen, & Brudney (2017), scholars in the fields of public administration and nonprofit management, attempt to examine organizational characteristics found in public administration research literature in order to develop a framework for volunteer involvement. The authors distinguish between two types of organizational characteristics: "nature," referring to the innate institutional characteristics that are enduring and difficult to change (such as resources and capacity, funding sources, structures, services, mission, and location) and "nurture," referring to characteristics of organizational culture and processes that can be manipulated through effective management. In describing these characteristics, the authors attempt to argue for a more holistic, multidimensional approach to volunteer involvement that seeks to go beyond easily measurable quantities, such as the number of volunteers, number of hours contributed, and retention rates. Using their framework, Nesbit, Christiansen, & Brudney (2017) hope that practitioners can be deliberate, thoughtful, and strategic in the ways they engage volunteers.

Larger social context and volunteers. Nina Eliasoph, Associate Professor of Sociology at the University of Southern California, provides a framework for evaluating the role of civic

associations in social and political life, as well as in their own lives as citizens, in her book *The Politics of Volunteering* (Eliasoph, 2013). Incorporating an interdisciplinary approach from sociology, political science, and communications studies, the book discusses the contemporary role of nonprofit organizations and civil society, and argues that volunteering is an inherently political act. It explores the three approaches toward the role of civil associations for democracy, framed through the social theories of Alexis de Tocqueville (1805-1859), Jane Addams (1860-1935) and Emma Goldman (1869-1940). Eliasoph illustrates how the tripod of civil society, government, and market balances differently in different countries, while she also discusses the effects of neoliberalism on international civil society, civic participation in conditions of social inequality, and how to improve civic participation and governance. The volume reflects upon the place of volunteering as active citizenship in the lives of volunteers and its call to shape a world by advocating for social change.

Omoto & Snyder (2002), publishing in the *American Behavioral Scientist*, examine the role of community in understanding volunteerism. In their article, the authors present a "model of the volunteer process" that identifies three stages (antecedents, experiences, consequences) and three levels of analysis (individual, organization, social system). Next, the authors propose two features of community—community as context for volunteerism and psychological sense of community—and articulate the implications of these features for the processes of volunteerism. Then, empirical evidence is drawn from studies of AIDS volunteers and their clients and suggests how communities and psychological sense of community encourage people to volunteer and connect with others, and how connecting to communities appears to be beneficial for the functioning of people living with HIV (Omoto & Snyder, 2002). Finally, Omoto & Snyder (2002) argue that explicit considerations of community can also contribute to understanding

other forms of the individual and collective action as well as broader civic and societal participation.

       Volunteers in community archives. In 2009, the U.K. Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) commissioned a report from Jura Consultants, a British management consulting company specializing in the cultural heritage sector. Using online research and consultation with strategic stakeholders, local authorities, and community archive projects across the U.K., Jura Consultants found that community archives were beneficial to volunteers in terms of their own health and well-being, and that of their communities. The Jura Consultants (2009) report is representative of a study undertaken by a mainstream institution to evaluate labor and volunteer service from the perspective of a managerial framework model.

       In contrast, all-volunteer archives have been publishing about their own projects and personal volunteer experiences in peer-reviewed journals as well as other platforms. Collectively run since its founding in 1974, the Lesbian Herstory Archives (LHA) has been informed by the perspectives, skills, and needs of its volunteers and coordinators throughout its history (Thistlethwaite, 1991; Smith-Cruz, Rando, Corbman, Edel, Gwenwald, Nestle, & Thistlethwaite, 2016). As Shawn(ta) Smith-Cruz (2016) notes, LHA is "a record of a volunteer community that has sustained engagement in lesbian life, political thought, and activism, through adherence to its foundational principles" (Smith-Cruz et al., 2016, p. 214).

       Similarly, Interference Archive (IA) is an all-volunteer run community archive in which the users are often the contributors of archival materials, the community represented in the collections, the stewards of the collections, the volunteers, the researchers, and the curators (Sellie et al., 2015). Self-identified as an activist archive, IA's organizational structures are "reflections of the many social movements represented in IA's collection—non-hierarchical,

consensus-based groups from the political left" (Gordon, Hoyer & Schreiner, 2018, para. 6).

While researchers can turn to some of the published materials above to investigate all-volunteer

outcomes, for community archives with a combination of paid staff and volunteers, the scholarly

research available to date has not been primarily from their perspective.

Summary

In conclusion, a brief history of the community archives movement in the United States,

Canada, and the United Kingdom provides a necessary background for community archiving

practices that have received the most attention from scholars and practitioners. Though

community archives challenge easy categorization, their work has created a remarkable swell of

influence on the scholarship surrounding the aspirational and symbolic purpose of archives and

the communities they serve. In response, scholars have since attempted to discuss useful

frameworks for understanding community archives. As Roeschley & Kim (2018) found in their

co-word occurrence analysis and data visualization study of titles, keywords, and abstracts in

peer-reviewed journal articles and conference proceedings from 2000-2017, scholarly research

on community archives is in its exploratory and emerging stages, and not much has been

published on their infrastructures (Roeschley & Kim, 2018).

Current research approaches to the study of volunteerism in mainstream archives as well

as different surveys and reports conducted on volunteer participation in the nonprofit and cultural

sectors provide a view into a complex topic studied from interdisciplinary perspectives at

different levels of analysis, ranging from the psychological, organizational, and societal. While

volunteer outcomes in all-volunteer community archives can be found in existing published

materials, volunteer perspectives are less available in the scholarship about combination

configurations of paid staff and volunteers in community archives.

Chapter III: Methodology

Overview and Restatement of Problem

Community archives grow out of the desire to collect documentary heritage that reflects common identities, experiences, and interests, and they depend on significant contributions of volunteers in order to be sustainable. Given the personal and individual dimensions associated with many community archives as well as the significant overlap among community archives' staff, volunteers, and patrons, this study will attempt to analyze responses from several face-to-face interviews with a small sample of community archive volunteers in the New York City area.

This study attempts not only to document the work contributions of volunteers but also to uncover volunteer motivations and connections to their existing social networks at large. The following research questions were identified as important aspects for the study:

1: How do volunteers become engaged with community archives?

2: Why do volunteers become engaged with community archives?

3: What kind of work do volunteers perform in their activities for community archives?

4: What types of skills do volunteers employ in their activities for community archives?

Definition of Terms

1: *Community Archive*: An independent, often grassroots, alternative to a mainstream institutional documentary heritage repository through which community members collect, describe, preserve, and manage the access of materials that are of enduring value to them (Bastian & Alexander, 2009; Flinn et al., 2009; Gilliland & Flinn, 2013; Caswell, 2014; Caswell & Jules, 2017).

2: *Volunteers*: According to the Fair Labor Standards Act cited in Nesbit, Christensen, & Brudney's (2018) study of volunteer involvement in public and nonprofit organizations,

volunteers are individuals "who perform services for civic, charitable, or humanitarian reasons without expectation of compensation" (Volunteers, 2018). This includes uncompensated members of the board of directors or trustees of a community archive or any nonprofit organization.

3: *Key Informants*: Practitioners and researchers in the field of community archives who provided important information for the study. They are subject specialists who advised on outreach, and referred interview subjects Key informants are knowledgeable enough to serve as guides and interpreters of the setting's unfamiliar language and culture (Wildemuth, 2017, p. 243).

Scope and Focus of Study

This study will focus only on volunteers in community archives, as opposed to mainstream archives and libraries as described by Leonard (2012) and Nicol & Johnson (2008). Although volunteerism has been previously studied on an organizational level (Nesbit et al., 2017), as well as in a larger societal context (Eliasoph, 2013), this study will focus on the individual volunteer level, and it will explore self-reported data from volunteers in community archives describing their personal perceptions about their entry, their motivations, their work, and their skills. None of the participants will be paid staff.

Research Methodology

This study not only aims to explore how and why volunteers join community archives but also seeks to describe the work and skills they perform in support of community archives. In order to focus on individual volunteer perceptions and self-reported descriptions, this study will employ survey as the research methodology, which involves asking questions of respondents. There are several reasons why survey is the most appropriate research methodology to achieve

the aims of the study. Firstly, a survey methodology provides a broad and flexible platform for

capturing many different experiences and opinions. Given the wide range of organizational

configurations that community archive volunteers find themselves, it necessary to have a flexible

research method that is able to capture a broad range of responses. Secondly, because community

archives evolve and develop over a life cycle with changing priorities over time, a survey method

allows for opening questioning, which can lead respondents to share extensively. Lastly, since

there are very limited published studies on volunteers in community archives, historical research

is not feasible, and longitudinal research is not feasible for practical reasons. The exploratory,

qualitative data gathered during survey research is preferable to this study than those that test for

specific hypotheses, such as experimental studies.

Strengths and weaknesses of the research method. The strengths of survey research

method for this study include its usefulness in obtaining of a wide range of responses. Since the

study focuses on individual, self-reported perceptions, survey research methodology can

accommodate many different to the same questions. Among its weaknesses as a research

method, surveying is time-consuming and costly, and it may be prone to bias in that the phrasing

of questions may lead respondents to answer in a certain way. For this study, survey research

provides a window into individual perceptions, but it may not be able to capture a participant's

comprehensive experience.

Research Design

This study seeks to explore the various ways in which volunteers initially hear about

community archives and how they come to be involved, as well as to discuss the type of work

undertaken by volunteers, related to their contributions, training, and projects. Using a survey

research methodology, this study will employ one-on-one, semi-structured interviews with

volunteers in community archives. According to Wildemuth (2017), semi-structured interviews are one of the most useful data collection methods for studying a wide range of behaviors (p. 256), and are thus appropriate for studying volunteers who are working in a wide variety of organizational configurations.

Research Instrument

This study will employ a semi-structured interview procedure with a combination of closed and open questions. A semi-structured interview guide was formulated based on the study's research questions, and a list of the interview questions is included in Appendix A. Table 1 below maps the interview questions onto the study's research questions with a brief explanation of the interview questions. The interview guide was designed to include essential questions, that address the central focus of the research, as well as probing questions, that are designed for interview subjects to elaborate on their answers (Wildemuth, 2017, p. 250). Due to the diverse configurations of community archives, open questions were necessary in order to capture all the various organizational environments that volunteers help to shape. The preferred order of the interview questions was primarily grouped by topic—advancing from engagement with the community archive, to motivation for volunteering, description of the work, and finally skills sharing. However, in practice, the sequence of questions varied based on the responses of the interview subjects.

Table 1

Research Questions and Corresponding Research Instrument Interview Survey Questions

Research Questions	Interview Questions (Specific Questions Are Listed in Appendix A)
RQ1: How do volunteers become engaged with community archives?	Q1, Q5, Q7, Q8, Q9 These questions are designed to determine the various ways in which volunteers initially hear about the community archive and how they come to be involved. Probing questions ask interview

	subjects to think about the ways in which other community service work and existing social relationships interact with their work for the community archives.
RQ2: Why do volunteers become engaged with community archives?	Q6, Q7, Q8, Q16 These questions are designed to assess motivation. Again, given the diverse configurations of community archives, motivations are especially complex, so the last question is a return to this theme.
RQ3: What kind of work do volunteers perform in their activities for community archives?	Q9, Q10, Q11, Q12, Q13, Q16 These questions are designed to discuss the type of work undertaken by volunteers, related to contributions, training, and projects.
RQ4: What types of skills do volunteers employ in their activities for community archives?	Q1, Q9, Q10, Q11, Q12, Q13, Q14, Q15, Q16 These questions are designed to discuss the soft and hard skills employed by volunteers in community archives. These skills can also be inferred from the responses to work questions in the analysis.

Pretesting the Interview Guide

In order to test validity of the interview guide and ease of subjects being interviewed, one

pretest interview was conducted with one experienced volunteer. The pretest interview took

about seven to ten minutes to explain the project and anonymity, to ask for consent, and to allow

for questions. Then, the actual interview using the guide lasted for thirty to thirty-five minutes.

The general feedback received regarding the content and length of interview was positive.

However, during the pretest, discussion drifted to other topics not related to the research purpose,

and the author was required to shift the conversation back towards the interview questions using

the guide. This pretest experience helped the researcher recognize the importance and usefulness

of the interview guide in conducting semi-structured interviews with many open-ended

questions.

Selection of Sample

Informal conversations concerning the study were held with key informants or

community archive practitioners who are known professionals in the field. A few key informants

were previous collaborators with the author. After discussing the purpose of the study with key

informants, these individuals provided important feedback and context. In order to explore the

motivations and self-perceptions of volunteers in community archives in general, it is necessary

for the sample to include both types of community archive volunteer structures—all-volunteer

and combination of volunteer/paid staff.

Additional background research was also conducted on community archive sites for

potential inclusion in this study, primarily through these archives' public websites but also

published materials such as journal articles, chapters in books, and blog posts. Site-specific data

was crucial in identifying the community identity of the archive at which interview subjects

worked, whether the archive was all-volunteer or a paid/volunteer mix, and other aspects of each

archive that could help to deepen the conversations with interviews subjects.

Appendix C provides narrative descriptions of each of the community archive sites in the

sample, and Table 2 in Chapter 4 presents them with the number of volunteers interviewed there.

In order to reflect the diversity of community archive configurations and identities, the sample

includes two all-volunteer community archives, and two independent nonprofit community

archives with a small paid staff and volunteer structure. The sample also includes one

community archive located within the Queens Public Library, which operates with paid staff and

volunteers. Although this particular community archive is currently affiliated with a mainstream

institution, it did not begin its life cycle that way, and it continues to practice by focusing on

participatory outreach and local history.

For the individual volunteers to be interviewed, this study employs purposive sampling

based upon recommendations from key informants in the field. Two volunteers from each site

allows for at least two different perspectives, and for expediency's sake, key informants in the

field were the points of contact to the individual volunteers for four of the five sites. After

reaching out to key informants and writing to some community archives directly, the author

recruited nine volunteers from five different community archives in New York City to participate

in the study.

Data Collection and Recording

Following the identification of potential interview subjects at the above sites, either

through key informants or through direct outreach, the author contacted potential interview

subjects through email and sent them a brief description of the study, including confidentiality

and consent information (Appendix B), as well the set of interview questions (Appendix A). In

most cases, interviews were audio-recorded and then transcribed by a third-party transcription

service. During all the interviews, the author brought a paper copy of the interview questions and

took notes.

Five interviews were conducted over the phone, and four of the phone interviews were

recorded using an electronic voice recorder. One participant who was interviewed over the phone

declined to be audio-recorded, and so the author took notes. One participant preferred to submit

responses over email. Three interviews were conducted in person, two on site at Interference

Archive and another on site at the Queens Library in St. Albans, Jamaica. These face-to-face

interviews were also recorded using an electronic voice recorder, and the author also took notes.

Unfortunately, the electronic voice recorder malfunctioned for the in person interview at Queens

Library in St. Albans. So, the author scheduled a follow-up phone interview with the participant,

which was then audio-recorded. Some of her responses are paraphrased using the author's notes

in Chapter 4. In addition, although interviews with the Lesbian Herstory Archives volunteers

were conducted over the phone, the author made a site visit to the physical location in Brooklyn.

All audio voice recordings are stored temporarily on the author's personal computer hard drive. To aid in analysis, the author utilized a third-party transcription service, Rev.com, a well-known transcription service whose website included a clear and suitable confidentiality policy. The author will destroy all voice recordings and physical paper notes when this study is completed.

Data Processing and Analysis

After receiving the transcriptions back from Rev.com, the transcription service, the author took care to remove any personal identifiers in the transcripts and removed individual identities, including first names. The author also cleaned up the transcripts by removing any data or dialogue that did not have to do with the research questions.

The data was analyzed using qualitative content analysis by reading each transcript over line-by-line. In this process, the author assigned preliminary themes based on the research questions as first-level codes (Entry/Engagement, Motivation, Work, and Skills). In a second round of analysis, the author identified and assigned second-level codes under each first-level code. Based on the responses given by each participant, these second-level codes were refined after a third and sometimes fourth round of analysis in attempt to determine emergent themes. A copy of the final codebook is included in Appendix X. Analyses of themes were conducted using constant comparative method, which includes the systematic comparison of each text assigned to a category with each of those already assigned to that category (Wildemuth, 2017, p. 321).

Limitations of the Study

This study is intended to explore the motivations, engagement, and role of volunteers in community archives. Due to time constraints and other practical considerations, the results of this study are limited to a very small sample size of volunteers and community archives.

Therefore, the results of this survey cannot be generalized or universally applied to all those considered part of the sample population. In addition, there is level of bias associated with the purposive sampling of some of the participants, who were recommended by key informants in the field. Additionally, interviews were conducted solely with volunteers working at community archives in New York City. Interviews with community archive volunteers outside of New York City would likely enhance the study's findings.

Chapter IV: Findings, Analysis, and Evaluation

Restatement of the Research Problem

As a field of study in its emerging and exploratory stages (Roeschley & Kim, 2018), there is limited literature published on volunteers, their motivations, and their work in community archives. This knowledge gap may lead to challenges in managing, operating, and researching community archives, as traditional models may not apply to volunteer structures at many community archives, partially because of the unique qualities discussed in previous chapters. This study seeks to help address that knowledge gap by discussing themes of volunteership identified through qualitative content analysis of semi-structured interviews with volunteers at community archives in New York City.

Overview

This chapter will begin by providing some demographic information of the interview subjects in the sample. Then, it will proceed in the order of the research questions that formed the basis of the study. Within each section, themes based on content analysis are discussed followed by interpretations of the themes. Tables and quotations from interviewees are provided within each section where appropriate. Efforts have been made to preserve the anonymity of interviewees, including abridging quotations to remove potentially identifiable information.

Demographic Information of Sample

In order to provide greater context for the community archive sites included in the sample, Table 2 presents some descriptive data. It includes the volunteer structure at each site as well as the community identity upon which the community archive is formed. As mentioned in earlier chapters, the definition of the "community" that the archive claims to represent, how that community is defined, and how that community's authority and approval of the archive is

demonstrated are all important structural characteristics which effects the configuration of

different community archives. For narrative descriptions of each of the community archives sites,

please refer to Appendix C.

Table 2

Community Archives Selected for Sample

Community Archives site	*Community Identity	Volunteer Structure	Number of interview subjects at site
Bayside Historical Society	Geographic	Combination of volunteer & paid staff	2
Queens Memory Project	Geographic	Combination of volunteer & paid staff	2
ARChive of Contemporary Music	Format of collection materials	Combination of volunteer & paid staff	1
Lesbian Herstory Archives	Political, Gender	All-Volunteer	2
Interference Archive	Political	All-Volunteer	2

The author recognizes that identities are intersectional and have named here only the primary identity upon which the community archive has been formed.

In addition, Table 3 below presents some contextual details regarding the professional

background of each interview subject at the time of writing. Some interview subjects have retired

or have had other careers, but the author has included their most recent professional field in the

demographic information. It includes their fields of study and their professional fields.

Table 3

Contextual Demographics of Interview Subjects in Sample

Professional Background	3 Retirees, 4 Professionals, 2 Early Professionals
Fields of study represented in the sample	Studio Art, Art History, Anthropology, Classical Studies, Library and Information Science, Photographic Preservation, Archives and Public History, Social Work, Psychology, Communication Arts, Accounting, Economics

Professional Fields represented in the sample*	Librarian, Archivist, Freelance Photographer, Mental Health and Special Needs Professional, Correctional Officer, Insurance Manager, Sales Manager, Retail Associate, Administrator and Web Technician

*Some are retired; some have had other careers or work before this.

Research Question One

      This question asks how volunteers become initially engaged with community archives. For the purposes of this study, Research Question One refers to a single, mutually exclusive, moment of engagement reported by interview subjects and is considered separate from motivation, which can be multi-faceted and is discussed in Research Question Two. Themes related to entry and outreach mechanisms were identified and coded, and they refer to a specific event or set of circumstances that led directly to volunteer involvement with the community archive. Responses varied from walking by the physical space, to very personal connections with core members, to co-founding the community archive. For all the interview subjects, flow chart figures were created in Appendix E.

      Findings. Interview subjects in the sample became engaged in volunteering for community archives in five different paths, as depicted in Table 4 below. As it shows, one interview subject reported that he lives in the neighborhood where the community archive is located, and that the design of the sign of the community archive piqued his curiosity (see Figure 1, Appendix E). Within a few days, he reached out to the volunteer coordinator to say that he would like to get involved. Two interview subjects reported that their attendance at events held by their respective community archives was key to their engagement: one was an outreach event about archives and oral histories, while the other was an exhibition advertised through an e-mailed newsletter that provided a weekly curated list of independent and unique art events around New York City (see Figure 4; Figure 8, Appendix E). One interview subject had been

visiting a public library branch, when she decided to ask a branch librarian about her profession.

Based on her professional curiosity in the library, the librarian suggested that she apply to

volunteer through the public library (see Figure 5, Appendix E). After applying to the public

library volunteer program, she was offered a choice of ongoing projects, and she chose the

community archive. Other interview subjects reported that their previous or existing social

networks were key to their involvement with the community archive. Two interview subjects

reported that their work with local civic associations, including the local community board and

park association, was key to their engagement (see Figure 2; Figure 3, Appendix E). Finally, for

three interview subjects, their involvement with the community archive arose from personal

relationships, friendships, and informal networks (see Figure 6; Figure 7; Figure 9, Appendix E).

Table 4

Frequency of Types of Entry and Engagement in Sample

TYPE OF ENTRY/ENGAGEMENT	**Definition**	**Interviewee # in which entry code is relevant**
Walk by	No previous personal relationship to community archive, engagement began due to noticing public-facing structure of archive and inquiring within	1
Event	Engagement began with attendance at community archive-led event or exhibition	4, 8*
Institutional referral	Engagement began with interaction with an individual working at a larger institution housing community archive, who provided referral to archive	5
Civic engagement	Involvement with local groups and issues key to engagement (e.g. community board, parks, neighborhood issues)	2, 3
Friendship/social networks	Personal relationships key to entry and engagement	6, 7, 9

*Event was advertised in an independent newsletter listserv that the interviewee indicated was key to attendance at the event.

Interpretation. The analysis of the data illustrates that for at least some community archive configurations, outreach is crucial to volunteer engagement, while others form organically around informal social networks. The findings about informal networks and friendships as key to engagement are consistent with existing research (Flinn et al., 2009; Gilliland & Flinn, 2013; Sheffield, 2017). In addition to events and exhibitions, geographic location with street level access may allow for passersby to become curious about the community archive and act immediately on that curiosity (as occurred for Interview Subject #1), or may encourage attendance to an upcoming event. Housing a community archive in a more public-facing location may require greater space costs (higher rent or ownership costs), but in this manner may support volunteer recruitment. For those community archives affiliated with a mainstream institution, it is important to have well-informed, and qualified staff who are able to direct patrons to appropriate resources, such as the institution's volunteer program. Civic groups and associations may be a resource for some community archives, and it may be beneficial for some community archives to advertise in newsletters or other listservs that may reach potential volunteers. Although social media was not factor for any of the interview subjects in this sample, a few interview subjects in the sample reported that, indeed, social media has proven to be an effective way of attracting new people, especially young people, to the community archive. Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter were all mentioned as entry points for new engagement.

Research Question Two

This question asks why volunteers become engaged with community archives and seeks to assess motivations. The analysis of interview data revealed wide-ranging and multi-faceted motivations behind volunteerism in community archives. While volunteers in the sample were motivated by different goals, the findings revealed some similar psychological and affective

motivations. Recognizing that motivations are complex processes involving dynamic interactions

of personality, demographics, identity, resources, and social context, generalizing motivations

can provide some explanatory power in understanding why individuals volunteer for community

archives and what aspects of their engagement appeal to them for continued involvement. For all

the interview subjects, flow chart figures were created in Appendix E.

Findings. The following table lists the motivations that interviewees cited and their

frequency of appearance in each interview subject's transcript.

Table 5

Motivations, by Frequency among Interview Subjects (See Appendix D for fuller definitions of motivation codes)

MOTIVATIONS	Frequency of motivation among interviewees	Interview Subject # in which motivation is relevant
Interest in research	9	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9
Diversifying and expanding access to historical resources	6	1, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9
Passion for place/space	6	2, 3, 4 (*6, 7, 9—important place to gather)
Political Views/Activism	6	3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9
Previous or ongoing volunteership connected to work for community archive	4	2, 3, 4, 9
Genealogical/Familial Interests	3	2, 4, 5
Seeking professional opportunities	2	1, 5
Property ownership	1	2
Retired/Spare time	1	4

Interest in research. Overwhelmingly, all respondents remarked on their interest in

research and on the role of an archive as providing evidentiary and educational value. All of

them describe their reasons for committing their time and efforts to community archives in terms

of their contributions to research, or their desire to connect people intellectually to materials

from a variety of sources in order to reach some conclusions to questions. Phrases such as

"worthy of study" and "instill history in a way completely separate from...books" as illustrated in

the quotations below represent variations on this theme found throughout all the interviews.

> The idea is to safeguard this stuff from being lost...You know, there used to be the idea that pop music was trash and minimal...And so we are sorting that, we are protecting it for the future. And pop music is what most people listen to and it's what most people enjoy, you know? And I think that it's as worthy of being studied as classical music or as jazz music or as any other kind of music or any part of art. —*Interview Subject #1*

> I am very appreciative of knowing that I am part of an organization that is a museum of our community, a place that school children attend with their teachers on an ongoing basis to instill history in a way completely separate from reading in books.—*Interview Subject #3*

> ***Diversifying stories and expanding access.*** Most of the interview subjects also discussed

how diversification of resources and expanding access to historical records was an important

motivation for them. For example, Interview Subject #4 talked about finding "joy" in her own

research process which focused on the African American history of her neighborhood, and the

participatory nature of the community archive to act as an important "platform" for her to share

her research was a motivating factor for her ongoing engagement.

> It is actually a joy to do research about Queens, and especially the [community archive] because it allows me to have a platform to talk about where I live, this history of Queens, and to venture out and do other things, like putting programs together.—*Interview Subject #4*

> ...I have been living here for almost 70 years, myself, you know, I need to do some research on why did we pick Queens—my family? It all started with my grandparents coming from South Carolina in the 1930s. And then I discovered that there was a slave history in the 1800s in Jamaica. And then I started doing other things, going to Washington to the National Archives and the Library of Congress. It got me all excited! That's how it all happened.—*Interview Subject #4*

Similarly, respondents shared their interest in diversifying the availability of resources on the

subject matter. Particularly, Interview Subject #7 spoke about the lack of availability of

resources and material on their subject matter as key to motivation, while Interview Subject #8

spoke of diversifying not just the material but also diversifying the experience of accessibility.

> Of the first ...core group of us who really were involved in getting the archives going, none of us were librarians…Though all of us had in some way rather tried to do research and had found a difficulty in finding lesbian material.—*Interview Subject #7*

> This isn't a lock and key, pristine, white-glove environment, where you need credentials to come in, to sit down and have a box in front of you. It's much less formal and restrictive than that….[Materials should] be seen and touched and smelled and torn and reproduced and distributed...It's incredible to be a part of something so alive. —*Interview Subject #8*

> ***Passion for physical place/space.*** In addition to interest in research and a desire to

expand access to historical resources, many interview subjects expressly tied the concept of

physical place to their motivations for engagement—or, in the case of all-volunteer

configurations, the creation of the community archive. Interview Subjects #1, #2, and #4

reported that their passion for their neighborhood stems from their upbringing and the amount of

time they have spent of their lives in this physical space. All of these interview subjects have

ongoing or previous volunteer experience in various local groups, such as civic associations,

park associations, local religious organizations, and political groups.

> I also have been a lifelong resident of [neighborhood] and have pride in "my home" so I want to see it preserved so others who follow me will be able to cherish one of the gems of New York City.—*Interview Subject #3 (Note: interview subject communicated responses over email, and included the quotation marks above.)*

Notably, this passion also exists for all-volunteer community archives, but instead of the physical

space of the neighborhood, respondents expressed pride that the tactile experience which they

steward is one of their own creation. Interview Subjects #6 and #7 describe the importance of

physical places, such as feminist bookstores, bars, and theaters to their communities in the 1970s

and 80s, which provided venues for community members to discuss their questions, ongoing

research, and projects. Establishing a physical space conducive to such discourse was a critical

requirement for their community archive, which began in an apartment. Interview Subjects #8

and #9 also described the importance of the physical space in providing fruitful grounds for

collaboration and collective pride.

>Well it was in [an] apartment and [we] lived together for a number of years so it was there before, not before I got there, but around the time I got there and after I left. We lived with it from 1974 to 1991 when we bought the house in Brooklyn.—*Interview Subject #7*

>I think [the community archive] at the most basic, provides physical space for this work which I think is really important, and also provides a community for this work. — *Interview Subject #9*

>***Political views and activism.*** This passion for creating an alternative physical space

conducive to community engagement is related to the theme of political views and activism as

another motivating factor. For Interview Subject #6, it was "not just about the collecting," but it

was "more about participating in the activism of that community."

>At the beginning I think I was in school. I hadn't lived in New York for that long and I had been very politically active in [the city], where I moved from. It takes a long time to build those sort of deep, political connections; so I was definitely trying to find the place to do that in New York; and this was one of those places. So definitely, that was a big part of it; finding and building political community.—*Interview Subject #9*

>There was an exhibition opening, and presenters who were releasing that night a calendar of prisoner art, and I just thought that was the coolest thing. Wait, this is in an archive? And they're doing this public programming and they're working with prisoners and publishing art, and making it a print material that is part of this exhibition. It sounds really cool.—*Interview Subject #8*

The political issues mentioned during the interviews in connections to interview subjects'

backgrounds, motivations, or ongoing interests included tobacco control and smoke-free

advocacy, information access under occupation outside the United States, and information access

and civil rights in the United States (see Figure 3; Figure 4; Figure 6; Figure 7; Figure 8; Figure

9, Appendix E).

Interpretation. Although the community archives in the sample represent a wide swath

of motivations, the frequency with which the motivations were discussed suggest that interest in

research, interest in expanding access to resources, passion for physical spaces, and political

views may be characteristics shared by many actively engaged volunteers for community

archives. Further discussion could be dedicated to other motivational factors beyond those

discussed by respondents, but several of these factors point more to incidental factors drawing

these respondents to involvement rather than core beliefs. For instance, searching for

opportunities because of spare time during retirement will likely not inform what outlets are

being sought to satisfy this search; those outlets will be informed by core motivations. Three

respondents cited genealogical or family interest, but two of those tied that interest to their

passion for the neighborhood where their family called home. It is also interesting that three

respondents indicated monetary considerations as motivating factors; these include the two

respondents who indicated that they were partially motivated by seeking professional

opportunities or skills through volunteering, and a third who cited his property ownership as a

motivating factor. The primacy of core motivations for these individuals may indeed be

outweighed by their monetary concerns, but regardless each of these individuals also cited one of

the higher-frequency motivations discussed more in detail above, and two of them cited two of

these motivations.

Given the nature of an archive as a resource for researchers, it is not surprising that an

interest in research was a motivating factor common to all respondents. Similarly, interests in

diversifying stories and an interest in providing the physical space speak to the nature of a

community archive in being grounded in a specific location. Spending time with like-minded

groups—especially those motivated by political activism—may provide the intellectual

foundation that facilitates strong community connections and affinity. For individuals who may

be thinking of starting their own community archive, it may be important to locate outlets or

venues that appeal to the intersections of these motivations.

Research Question Three

This question attempts to describe the kind of work volunteers perform in their activities

for community archives. This question is meant to elicit the sometimes invisible and unseen

volunteer labor often required to make each of the community archives remain vital, dynamic

spaces for connection and creation. Although there were similar work tasks and variations of

themes described by each volunteer, this research question, more than the previous two,

illustrated the major differences between all-volunteer configurations and combination of paid

staff and volunteer configurations.

Findings. The limited sample size of the study prevents comprehensive and thorough

data collection on work at each community archive, so the themes identified here are only based

on the interviews conducted with the volunteers.

Workflow factors. Community archives configured with a combination of a small paid

staff and volunteers, similar to traditional configurations among small non-profit organizations,

are often organized in hierarchical ways with clearly defined roles and responsibilities. All-

volunteer community archives, in contrast, usually operate in non-hierarchical ways with

community members taking on fluid and rotating roles in the organization, including roles and

responsibilities that would be reserved for paid staff or leadership among traditionally organized

institutions. For example, one all-volunteer community archive in the sample is organized into

working groups that focus on different projects or tasks. These include the administration,

cataloging, born digital, education, and audio working groups, as well as working groups that

form around each exhibition.

However, these categories are not mutually exclusive, and community archives that operate with a combination of paid staff and volunteers in the sample also allow for varying degrees of flexibility for volunteer roles. In attempting to understand the types of work that volunteers perform for the community archives in this study, it is important to also consider factors specific to each archive that lead to the need for work performed by volunteers. The below chart maps these archive-specific workflow factors to the types of work that interview subjects describe conducting. The workflow factors below include those described by interview subjects as well as key informants, and in some cases research conducted online to gather more information when needed. One caveat to the below chart, discussed in more detail in the "Limitations" section in Chapter 3, is that the volunteer work activities presented in this chart and discussed in more detail below are based solely on these interviews and therefore do not form a comprehensive description of the full array of volunteer needs and responsibilities at these archives.

Table 6

Workflow Factors and Volunteer Work Activities Described by Interview Subjects (See Appendix D for fuller definitions of motivation codes)

Community Archive: Workflow Configuration	Identified Workflow Factors	Volunteer Work Activities Described by Interviewees
ARChive of Contemporary Music (ARC): Combo paid staff/volunteers	• Started with the personal collection of music industry producer • Independent nonprofit • Large volume of material to physically process • Tasks are collection process intensive • Collaborate with Internet Archive and partners • Not open to the public	• Processing collections • Training
Bayside Historical Society (BHS): Combo paid	• Volunteer board members • Independent nonprofit Attend meetings	• Fundraising • Outreach • Exhibition planning

staff/volunteers	• Financial sustainability • Collaborate with local businesses and sponsors	
Queens Memory Project (QMP): Combo paid staff/volunteers	• Affiliated with public library and archives • Community-led, participatory programming and events celebrating the neighborhood • Digitization, research, processing digital artifacts	• Outreach • Processing collections • Training
Lesbian Herstory Archives (LHA): All-Volunteer	• Independent nonprofit • Autonomous archive • Core collective of coordinators • Staffing the space, upkeep of space, conducting tours, providing reference • Creating their own subject headings, cataloging, and arrangement • Legacy planning	• Financial Management • Fundraising • Outreach • Processing collections • Training
Interference Archive (IA): All-Volunteer	• Independent nonprofit • Autonomous archive • Community "sustainers" make consistent monthly donations • Network of "working groups" that focus on tasks or exhibitions • Staffing the space, upkeep of space, conducting tours, providing reference • Mounting exhibitions and event organizing	• Outreach • Processing collections • Exhibition planning

Financial management and fundraising. Whether and how volunteers support financial

accounting and fundraising depends largely on whether community archives configurations are

all-volunteer or a hierarchically-organized mix of volunteers and paid staff, and whether the

archive is located in a mainstream institution or not. Volunteers for the Queens Memory Project

(QMP), for example, do not engage in financial management like bookkeeping or leading

fundraising efforts because those duties are performed by paid staff serving the archive or paid

staff located in other departments within Queens Library. Bayside Historical Society (BHS) and

the ARChive of Contemporary Music (ARC) are not situated within larger institutions, but are

structured in a manner that divides labor between a board of trustees that helps to fundraise and

provide financial oversight—as in traditional roles of most non-profit boards—and paid staff that

conducts various professional activities, and volunteers who primarily provide programmatic

assistance and support with events that have been organized by others.

Given the potential legal and existential issues involved with financial activities and

budgetary planning, it is unsurprising that organizations with professional staff would use such

staff for these activities. The respondent who volunteered for ARC, for example, indicated that

paid staff filled these functions. In contrast, all-volunteer community archives do not pay salaries

and therefore must rely on volunteer workers for financial management and fundraising.

However, the burden of fundraising is alleviated partially by not needing to raise funds to pay

any staff. In addition, both all-volunteer community archives in this study, Lesbian Herstory

Archives (LHA) and Interference Archive (IA), are able to rely on funds raised from individual

donors, including reliable groups of dedicated financial supporters, to pay for basic expenses

supporting upkeep (e.g. paying for utilities). In the case of LHA, a formal annual appeal is held

every fall and donations are solicited both at public events as well as on the organization's

website. While these volunteer-run community archives still seek institutional funding or grants

when available, funding from institutional donors is not typically necessary to maintain basic

operational costs.

> As opposed to some organizations that have a budget and then they try to raise the money
> for the budget...we don't start a project until we have the money to start the project. So
> that means some years, we don't buy another file cabinet. And some years we have the
> money [to] buy a file cabinet...some years we have money for more complex projects,
> and some years we don't. And some years we can get some small grants, and some years
> we don't.—*Interview Subject #7*

Outreach and exhibition planning. The theme of outreach was very important to the

sample, which includes representing the archive at events to attract community members in the

neighborhood, collaborating with other local organizations, and, for some, staffing or keeping the

doors open. For some community archives, outreach is key to meeting fundraising goals.

Interview subjects #2 and #3 at BHS both described such fundraising events as a large part of

their work for the archive, including collaborations with local businesses. Respondents also

described outreach activities as addressing their motivations for involvement in community

archive work—for example, for LHA and IA, outreach efforts helped satisfy their interests in

expanding access.

Notably, Interview Subject #4 discussed how she continues to research and conceive the

organization and programming of events related to the history of her neighborhood in Queens. In

collaboration with the community archive, her participation has been a vital part of the success of

such active programming, including a jazz and musical history of her neighborhood, especially a

tribute to a famous jazz artist where attendance was standing room only and many community

members donated food.

> We need to continue to share our information and our stories, you know, because this is a
> melting pot and so many cultures and people need to talk to one another...to continue [to
> share] the history of Queens communities...—*Interview Subject #4*

Inspired by her own family's history during the Great Migration of the 1930s, this interview

subject's participation was important to community archive outreach events related to migration

stories to Queens, and she reported that she continues to promote the community archive in her

other neighborhood groups in which she is active, including her church and political groups. In

addition, she organizes historical bus tours for her church group during which she always

mentions the community archive, and her work with the community archive and with other local

groups continues to inform her public service.

Outreach activities also overlap with recruitment efforts. Interview Subject #1 and #7

discussed how students in library schools in the area have come to do internships. In this way,

outreach is also accomplished by building relationships with educational organizations.

>Somebody came from Queens, somebody came from Pratt, somebody came from...the different library schools...These were good internships, they got the proper supervision, they got what they needed.—*Interview Subject #7*

For autonomous archives located in independent spaces, like LHA and IA, staffing is important for access, especially experiential access, for the larger community. Staffing is focused toward regular open hours and educational programming, including exhibitions, talks, and workshops. Autonomous archives, which do not have institutional resources or equipment, think about outreach and access in innovative and resourceful ways.

>It was like an outreach project to build a mobile archive unit. So we were meeting with bike manufacturers trying to figure out a way that we could build a flat file [cabinet] that we could take into the public space somewhere, open it up to be like a tabletop, bring posters, make buttons, silkscreen, give things away.—*Interview Subject #8*

>In addition, a few interview subjects mentioned their work on exhibition planning for the community archive. Interview Subject #2, who volunteers for a combination workflow configuration, mentioned collaborating with local businesses to exhibit collection materials for fundraising purposes. Interview Subject #9 at IA described her involvement in an exhibition that she initially conceived but was able to expand into greater and unexpected directions due to the involvement of the community archive.

>I would say a transition from being a casual volunteer, to being a more core volunteer was when I carried [the] exhibition...The community was totally critical to the project, and also to pushing the project in directions that I wouldn't have personally thought of, but made it a much better exhibition.—*Interview Subject #9*

This same interview subject notes that her enthusiasm for exhibition planning is one reason why she remains engaged in the community archive. The archive is a way for her to the freedom to explore projects not related to processing that are "ambitious in scope [and] nothing that [she] would ever encounter in [her] paid work; and also things that [she] couldn't just do on [her] own," such as exhibition planning.

No matter the workflow configuration, volunteers are all invaluable to outreach for community archives, due to their local knowledge, their expertise of the neighborhood, their relationship to the collection, or their extensive social connections.

Processing collections. While not all volunteers in the sample described processing the collections, at least four of them did. Interview Subject #1 discussed how the much of the activities for volunteers and interns at ARC are primarily driven by the large volume of material needing to be processed for the collection. These tasks and processes are extensively documented and include unpacking boxes, conducting inventories, and cataloging. Interview Subject #5 described activities such as digitization of rare materials in the collection and creation of time codes or finding aids for researchers. For autonomous archives, volunteers processed the collections in ways that are more closely associated with their political motivations for starting the archive.

> We arrange things alphabetically but in the fiction area and poetry and those kinds of things alphabetically by first name, women's first name. Because we started in the 1970s and we were de-emphasizing patriarchal lineage. But, after that things get categorized by title. And no we don't follow Dewey Decimal or any of those kinds of systems.
> —*Interview Subject #7*

In addition, the all-volunteer configuration allows for a more flexible and fluid volunteer structure, as hours or completed tasks are not tracked, in contrast to volunteers in more traditional, mainstream institutions.

> Or if there's someone who wants to catalog records, they can come in during Saturdays when it's open hours, we have cataloging parties. But there's no one...to check off the hours...it's less formal, it's way more like "choose your own adventure novel" style.
> —*Interview Subject #8*

Training. As mentioned above, Interview Subjects #1 and #5 described the activities they do around processing collections and remarked that they both received training on these processes. While Interview Subjects #1 and #5 described practically codified processes,

volunteers at autonomous archives reported different approaches to the concept of training, and

both LHA and IA mentioned training in the context of staffing, an important aspect of outreach

and experiential access. Interview Subject #9 describes the process by which training was

attempted and then forgone due to limited capacity.

> So we don't have a set training model. But since we're collective and non-hierarchical, we do what can be referred to as horizontal mentorship. So we share skills and train each other on specific parts of the work...and I think that's actually a really core aspect of what we do. I think at times we have tried to more formally train people in specific things like what the responsibilities are when you're staffing or when you're running an event. I think that's actually been really successful in terms of developing our volunteer base in those areas...But the reality is that we, for the most part, don't have the capacity to be offering those kinds of trainings on a regular basis; and I think maybe that's okay. We really needed more staffers than we did the training, and we got more staffers. So I think the flexibility might serve us better than what we give ourselves credit for, actually.
> —*Interview Subject #9*

For LHA, Interview Subject #7 reported that recently staffing has become an important area of

training as members of the community archive have come to consider legacy planning.

> Now we're doing something called docent training...we've trained...about five or six women who are interested in learning about how we staff. So they're being trained so that they too can staff, because the more we have people who can staff and keep the hours open, the better that is.—*Interview Subject #7*

Interpretation. Interviews with volunteers in the community archives in this sample

revealed the following themes related to work: financial management, fundraising, outreach,

processing collections, and training. Of all these themes, financial management, outreach and

training seem to be most interesting themes to explore the differences between all-volunteer

configurations and combination of paid staff and volunteer configurations. Each configuration

allows some degree of flexibility for the volunteers, and it depends what each community

archive deems is their priority at any given time. The lifecycle of autonomous archives becomes

a significant factor in determining the management of volunteer labor.

Research Question Four

This questions aims to describe the types of skills volunteers employ in their activities for community archives. Community archives are dynamic sites of knowledge production, collective efforts, and individual pride. All community archives require collective efforts to function, and the contributions that volunteers make to those collective efforts reveal not only the work that they perform but also the skills they use to achieve those vital work functions. Analysis can reveal how volunteers relate the work they value—the type of work that keeps them engaged and supports volunteer retention—to the skills they apply in achieving these contributions. These skills can include skills they already possessed prior to volunteer engagement and the skills they develop while volunteering.

Findings. Based on interview data, volunteers' most valuable contributions are listed in Table 7 below, and the types of skills that support these contributions are discussed in the sections following Table 7. When possible, the second column in Table 6 below includes a direct quote from the interview subject and is enclosed in quotation marks. When direct quotes were not available, the author paraphrased a short summary.

Table 7

Most Important Contributions Reported by Interview Subjects and Skills Described by Interview Subjects (See Appendix D for fuller definitions of skills codes)

Interviewee Subject #	**Most important contributions reported during interview**	**Skills Described by Interviewees**
1	"I think the 78's project...The handling the 78's and the packaging and that *whole* process…I've had the time to get training in every aspect of it...I know enough to kind of do the in-between jobs around...They don't have to explain every little detail, so I can kind of do a lot of that little stuff...it's too small for the head archivist and coordinator. And it's too large for the intern."	• Administrative skills • Communication skills • Improvisational skills

2	As board member and treasurer for the community archive, his most valuable contributions included fundraising and cultivating sponsors.	• Administrative skills • Communication skills • Event planning skills
3	"My most important contribution is to bring my community leadership to this organization that I have established in previous Northeast Queens organizations."	• Communication skills
4	Interview Subject #4 participated in programming events in collaboration with the community archive related to the history of her neighborhood in Queens. She mentioned being proud to be connecting history to the present and sharing her knowledge of the community.	• Event planning skills • Communication skills • Research skills • Storytelling skills
5	"Well, I think I'm really passionate, and I'm a successful volunteer because I care about what I'm doing... I also write time codes for oral histories that have already been conducted. So it's not exactly like a transcript, but it's just an abbreviation. So [researchers] can search through tabs and quotes. My write-up of the interview will pop up for them to research as necessary."	• Storytelling skills • Research skills
6	Interview Subject #6 served as the Volunteer Coordinator for twenty years. Among her accomplishments, she mentioned her photography documentation of the first ten years of the community archive and gay pride marches, and oral histories of one of the first lesbian civil and political rights organizations in the United States.	• Research skills • Communication skills • Storytelling skills
7	"Balancing the books. I'm the treasurer. I've been the treasurer since day one, and I'm still the treasurer today. I balance it to the penny. Which means that I'm also in charge of the annual fundraising letter and...I've taken that on as one of my responsi-- you know, one of the things that I'm willing to do. But, basically, I'm the one who writes the bills, and pays the checks, and deposits the money and all that kind of stuff. Puts out the quarterly reports and all of that. So I think that's my most major contribution."	• Administrative skills • Financial management skills • Improvisational skills
8	"Surprisingly, less of the things that I thought I would bring...I think the most significant contributions have been these things that have just sort of come up by chance, like the library being ... I never thought I would have started that group with the people that I'm doing that with, and that we'd be cataloging books. I don't deal with books much in my professional life. And libraries are not what I studied, so that's a whole complete surprise. But it was something that I really felt needed to be done, and no one else was really jumping ahead with making progress on that."	• Communication skills • Improvisational skills
9	Interview Subject #9 served as the Volunteer Coordinator for three and half years. "I guess communication and organizing people. Then also, I mean, I have curated a bunch of shows here; so I would say that's the other thing. I think for me, it's been finding a balance	• Administrative skills • Communication skills

	between contributing into more administrative skills that are kind of dry and then also getting to work on fun projects…But I also really appreciate that it takes a lot of pretty boring work to make [the community archive] happen."	• Research skills • Storytelling skills

Administrative, financial management, event planning, and improvisational skills.
Many of the volunteers exercise administrative skills in service of the daily operations of the community archive, including organizing inventory, scheduling volunteers, tracking supplies, upkeep of the space, etc. In addition, financial management is another important skill that some volunteers described, especially by volunteers who work for community archives that are not affiliated with a mainstream institution. With his background in accounting and economics, Interview Subject #2 volunteers as the Treasurer of the board and assists with ensuring financial sustainability for his organization, including the small paid staff. Similarly, Interview Subject #7 discussed how her financial management is her greatest contribution to the all-volunteer community archive where she has overseen the bookkeeping for more than forty years.

Event planning is another important skill for volunteers at community archives. Many interview subjects discussed the events volunteers have organized for fundraising, exhibitions, and openings, and they mentioned how such event planning included outreach to local businesses, local residents, community members, and civic organizations for collaboration. It is also important to note that simply because a volunteer may have specific skills that could be used in archival settings, it does not necessarily mean those skills are needed at the archive or that volunteers are hoping to use these skills. For example, Interview Subject #9, who is a professional archivist, reported that she actually does not use her professional skills at the community archive and how this has a liberating affect for her to experiment and improvise.

> I obviously have a lot of professional skills as an archivist, and actually I don't really use them here. I don't particularly work on the collections, or describe the collections...for me this is a way to mix up what I'm doing.—*Interview Subject #9*

Furthermore, Interview Subject #8, in Table 6, also described how he actually does not use his professional skills in his volunteer role. In addition, Interview Subject #7 had also mentioned how "none of us were librarians" when they started the archive. The improvisational nature of the independent, all-volunteer community archive described by Interview Subjects #7, #8, and #9 allows volunteers to exercise different skills than those honed as professionals and to support the work of other volunteers or researchers who would like to use the collections.

> If you want to come on a day that somebody's staffing and put in a few hours on a project, come along. If you want to come regularly, we can help make it a little bit easier for you, because over time...you can come in yourself and do the work you are interested in doing.—*Interview Subject #7*

Communication skills. Communication skills were one of the most frequent types of skills represented in the sample. From interpersonal communication among members in the community archive to interacting with the public, community archives must include volunteers who have the ability to articulate vision, express needs, conduct outreach, and facilitate solutions effectively among community members, organizational partners, and the public. Even Interview Subject #1, whose community is archive is not public, is required to communicate effectively with paid staff and other volunteers on the processing of collections. Volunteers at BHS are often using their communications skills in service of fundraising goals and working with local businesses. At QMP, Interview Subject #4 uses her communication skills in her collaborations for outreach events with the public library and neighborhood groups, and at LHA, volunteers discussed taking the time to answer all the letters received in the mail, asking about the materials or wanting to donate materials to the community archive.

Considering the collective workflows of all-volunteer community archives, communication skills are even more critical to their endeavors, especially because volunteers must communicate effectively with each other about how to distribute any needed work among themselves. At IA, the archive's workflow configurations require volunteers to communicate within their working groups, and their exhibitions often attract people with whom they must engage and who may become potential volunteers. In addition, at both LHA and IA, volunteers provide reference services during staffing hours, events, and tours, which is important for communicating about their collections, their space, and their mission with the larger public.

Research and storytelling skills. Many volunteers in the sample also have the ability to conduct research, which includes locating and appraising quality information and resources on a topic, and also employ storytelling skills, which includes curating and bringing together disparate elements of research and knowledge into a cohesive narrative. At QMP, Interview Subject #4 reported that she does research for outreach programming, and Interview Subject #5 seeks to create access for researchers by creating time codes or finding aids. She has to exercise storytelling skills as she makes decisions of what to emphasize for the time codes. At LHA, Interview Subject #6 employed both research and storytelling skills in her photojournalism documentation as well as in the oral history project, which she described as one of her most important contributions. At IA, Interview Subject #9 has also performed research and storytelling skills in curating exhibitions for the community archive.

Interpretation. Volunteers for community archives are highly skilled communicators, administrators, researchers, and curators. Due to an emphasis on outreach and access or fundraising, volunteers for community archives tend to exercise their communication skills quite often. Communication was identified as an important skill no only in terms of communicating

with the larger public but also in terms of the working with other community members and other local organizations on projects. In addition, many of the volunteers discussed financial management, administration, and event planning as well as research and storytelling as all part of volunteer activities in the interviews.

Summary

In analyzing the ways in which volunteers come to be engaged with community archives, the findings from this study are consistent with existing research about informal social networks and friendships as key to engagement, especially for autonomous archives (Flinn et al., 2009; Gilliland & Flinn, 2013; Sheffield, 2017). Analysis also revealed that civic groups and associations as well as a referral from the public library were all important entries of engagement for volunteers. Geographic location with street level access as well as attendance at an outreach event or exhibition were cited as important points of entry for their participation as volunteers. Interestingly, social media was not a factor for any of the interview subjects in this sample, though many of the interview subjects suggested that social media, including Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter, has proven to be an effective way of attracting new people, especially young people, to the community archive.

Volunteers in community archives become engaged for a variety of reasons, and motivations vary widely from individual to individual and context to context. Overwhelmingly, however, an interest in research as well as a passion for physical place/space was important motivating considerations. Neighborhood pride and curiosity about the neighborhood were significant themes, as well as creating a physical space for gathering and sharing with like-minded community members, as in the cases of LHA and IA. Diversifying stories and access was also an important theme, and this is likely tied to volunteers imagining the archive as an

alternative space for providing both evidentiary and narrative value. Aside from these motivations, interestingly, monetary considerations were also cited as motivating factors, including home ownership and seeking professional opportunities or skills through volunteering. This finding speaks to the success of these community archives in positioning themselves as sites of professionalism, developing alongside mainstream institutions in the field. Political views and activism are also significant motivations for some community archives. Similar to the finding about engagement through informal social networks, this finding is consistent with existing research as well (Flinn et al., 2009; Gilliland & Flinn, 2013; Sheffield, 2017).

In analyzing the work activities performed by volunteers in the sample, one is confronted with understanding the infrastructures of their organizations, of which there is limited research available (Roeschley & Kim, 2018). The configurations of these community archives directly effect what volunteers do in their activities. Community archives that are independent nonprofits must all do some form of administrative work and financial management. Community archives affiliated with larger institutions do similar work when applying for grants and requesting budgetary approval, albeit while being able to rely on the financial structures of these larger institutions. In addition to administration and financial management, fundraising was mentioned as a theme in the interviews, with different configurations employing different approaches to fundraising as well. In addition, the lifecycle of community archives can change the work activities or priorities of volunteers over time. In this sample, volunteer work activities also involved outreach, exhibition planning, processing collections, and training. The findings associated with training revealed how all-volunteer community archives approach this aspect of volunteering differently than the other community archives in the sample.

All community archive volunteers in the sample are extremely skilled, exhibiting many different skills, such as administration, financial management, communication, event planning, research, storytelling, and improvisation. Communication or interpersonal skills are a significant theme for volunteers not only for conducting outreach but also for completing projects with their fellow volunteers. Given the requirements of such endeavors, the ability of volunteers in this sample to balance their professional and personal lives with their work for the community archive should be commended.

Chapter V: Summary, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Summary

Volunteers provide a crucial combination of passion, dedication, imagination, work, and skills to bring community archives to life. These independent projects often require great personal sacrifice on the part of volunteers, which can be considered an enormous benefit to the community archive but also a potential vulnerability with regard to long-term sustainability and succession. As archival scholars, practitioners, and cultural heritage funding agencies turn to studying the sustainability and infrastructure of community archives, more studies are needed to understand how volunteers exist in these spaces now. This study aims to provide an introduction to volunteers in community archives by investigating the ways in which volunteers become engaged, by examining their motivations, and by exploring the work they do and skills they employ in these vital community spaces.

The study attempts to produce a collective description of how volunteers become engaged with community archives, the beliefs and motivations found within their projects and practices, as well as the types of work they do and skills they employ. The following research questions were identified as important aspects for the study:

1: How do volunteers become engaged with community archives?

2: Why do volunteers become engaged with community archives?

3: What kind of work do volunteers perform in their activities for community archives?

4: What types of skills do volunteers employ in their activities for community archives? This study employed semi-structured interviews with nine volunteers from five community archives in the New York City area, and the results were analyzed using qualitative content analysis research methods.

Conclusions

In general, volunteers in community archives are highly skilled communicators, administrators, researchers, and curators who are motivated by a variety of different factors and who are able to take on a wide variety of flexible roles to meet the needs of their different organizational configurations. As independent projects, volunteers can take on multiple and fluid roles that can also be found in mainstream organizations. These include, but are not limited to, finance management, fundraising, outreach, exhibition planning, processing collections, and training. Their entry points of engagement varied, but outreach events and informal social networking were important themes. The frequency with which the interview subjects discussed their motivations suggests that interest in research, interest in diversifying stories and expanding access to resources, passion for physical spaces, and political views may be characteristics shared by many actively engaged volunteers for community archives.

Limitations. Studying volunteers in community archives comes with several challenges. In addition to the limited availability of existing research on the infrastructures of community archives (Roeschley & Kim, 2018), the wide variety of configurations of community archives, ranging from entirely independent, permanent, 501(c)(3) nonprofit organizations, to those having a close working relationship with mainstream institutions, to informal, loosely defined, temporary configurations of dedicated community members, make it particularly difficult to apply any generalizable findings on infrastructure and organization to other community archive practitioners in the field, including volunteer structures. Community archives have often published about their own specific organizational structures, and perhaps this explains the prominence of case studies in archival scholarship (Roeschley & Kim, 2018). Variables including the personal and individual dimensions of community members, availability of

resources, and ideological inclinations, such as cultural or political values, all contribute to the configuration of a community archive at certain points in time. Given the personal and idiosyncratic dimensions and of community archives, qualitative research using one-on-one interviews as a data collection technique seems to be the most logical way to study volunteers in community archives. However, one-on-one interviews are time consuming and costly, and comprehensive results will be difficult to ascertain.

In addition, maintaining anonymity in studies of community archives is a major challenge. This speaks to the strength of the personal ties and personal stakes that are integrated with the work of community archives. Zavala et al.'s (2017) study using semi-structured interviews with seventeen community archive founders, staff, and volunteers at twelve Southern California community archives reported their findings using identifiable personal names with the consent of the participants, who were also given time to read the whole article and provide consent before publication. It is difficult to report on findings while maintaining anonymity. Any future survey of volunteers will need time and resources to work through these difficulties. Also, attempting to study volunteers' work activities and skills in both all-volunteer and combination of paid staff/volunteer environments presents many challenges. These two environments operate differently, and this should be taken into consideration in any study of the organizational structures of community archives.

Practical implications. For those community archives that have a close working relationship with mainstream institutions, the results of this study may be useful to practitioners in the field interested in volunteer recruitment, outcomes, and sustainability. It may be of interest to project leaders, community engagement practitioners, community archivists, public historians, and public librarians who would like to better understand volunteer motivations and who would

like to support positive volunteer outcomes. For autonomous archive practitioners, the results of

this study may provide a greater understanding of their volunteer work in the context of other

volunteers in different community archive environments. In addition, this study may be useful

for individuals or groups who are considering starting their own community archive. The

findings may provide insights into volunteer motivations and work within a variety of

community archive configurations. The study sheds light on networking strategies among

volunteers in creating active membership or participation in a possible community archive.

Theoretical contributions. This study may add to the emerging area of community

archives in archival scholarship, particularly in its investigation of infrastructure through the lens

of volunteers in community archives. In addition, it may have interdisciplinary appeal to scholars

who study volunteerism in nonprofits, particularly in regard to entry of engagement and

motivations.

Recommendations

As archival scholars, practitioners, and cultural heritage funding agencies turn to studying

community archives, sustainability, and infrastructure, more work on understanding how

volunteers exist in these contexts is needed. Further studies of volunteers in community archives

should focus on either all-volunteer community archives or archives with paid staff/volunteer

configurations. Similarly, more work still needs to be done to understand the infrastructure and

organizational configurations of community archives. In addition, a comprehensive

understanding of the history or current landscape of funding models for community-based

archives is lacking. Such a study would have been helpful in exploring the roles of volunteers in

community archives. Practitioners and leaders in the field are already considering this, and many

have published on the blogging platform, Medium. For example, archivist Bergis Jules has called

for future studies to perform "a funding needs analyses that incorporates community values and

proposes new models for community-based archives that are informed by these activities

collectively" (Jules, 2018, para. 4).

Further discussion could also be dedicated to entry and engagement via social media.

Although this was not a factor for the sample in this study, several interview subjects mentioned

social media as an entry point. In addition, future studies could focus on the community archives

that are formed around friendships or informal social networks to see if other themes specific to

these archives can be identified through a larger sample.

Further research could be conducted focusing on qualities of autonomous or all-volunteer

community archives that lead to their success and sustainability. People working in all-volunteer

archives hold each other socially accountable instead of economically accountable for their

responsibilities to keep the organization functioning. More work is needed to understand the

factors behind these successes, as well as the factors behind why other community archives may

have failed. Longitudinal studies of community archives are recommended for community

archives during several points during the lifecycle. Finally, the motivational themes identified in

this study deserve closer scrutiny, and a larger analysis conducted to determine third, or even

fourth, level code themes might provide some further understanding of volunteers' motivations

in community archives.

Volunteers provide the necessary passion, imagination, labor, and skills to create

community archives as "material site[s] of the collective will to remember" (Appadurai, 2003,

para. 7). Their motivations and contributions are essential to understanding how the aspirational

and symbolic purpose of archives are converted into the practical means by which they serve

their communities.

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Appendix A

Interview Survey Guide for Volunteers in Community Archives

Q1. Can you briefly describe your educational and professional background?

Q2. Which community archive do you volunteer for? Is your community archive all-volunteer run, or is it a combination of volunteer and paid staff?

Q3. During what years did you volunteer for the community archive? How long have you volunteered for the community archive?

Q4. About how many hours per week do you estimate you have volunteered for the community archive?

Q5. How did you originally hear about the community archive? How did you come to be involved with the community archive?

Q6. Why did you decide to become a volunteer for the community archive? What factors led you to volunteer for this specific community archive?

Q7. Are you involved in other volunteer service work in the community? Did this lead you to volunteer for the community archive?

Q8. In what ways do your existing social networks overlap with your work for the community archive?

Q9. Have you been involved in recruiting other volunteers for the community archive?

Q10. What are your responsibilities as a volunteer for the community archive? If the site is a combination of volunteer and paid staff, what is your relationship with paid staff?

Q11. What do you think are your most important contributions to the community archive? These can be both direct and indirect.

Q12. Were you provided any training before you began your work with the community archive? And, if so, what kind of training?

Q13. Do you, as a volunteer, provide training to other volunteers for the community archive? And, if so, what kinds of training do you provide?

Q14. What skills do you bring to your role as a volunteer for the community archive?

Q15. What skills do you think you have picked up after being a part of the community archive?

Q16. What do you find most valuable about your volunteer experience? This can be in both tangible and intangible ways.

Appendix B

**Research Description, Consent, & Confidentiality Information
Provided to Interview Subjects**

Queens College, CUNY Capstone Research Project:
Volunteers & Community Archives

Primary Investigator Information   Academic Advisor Information
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Research Study Description

This study aims to explore how and why volunteers join community archives as well as the work
volunteers perform in support of community archives. The following research questions were
identified as important aspects for this study:

1: How do volunteers become engaged with community archives?

2: Why do volunteers become engaged with community archives?

3: What kind of work do volunteers perform in their activities for community archives?

4: What types of skills do volunteers employ in their activities for community archives?

I am currently seeking participants willing to discuss their volunteer experiences with me in an
interview format.

A copy of the interview questions is included here for your convenience, starting on page 3 of
this document. They are a mix of closed and open questions. As the interviewer, I will pose
questions, and the session will be audio-recorded. If you are willing to participate in this study,
please know that you will be free to refrain from answering any of these questions. I am seeking
people who are willing to speak with me one-on-one for about 45 minutes to 1 hour via phone,
webcam, Google Chat or other technology of your choice. You will not be paid to be recorded.
Based on my analysis, I may request a short follow up interview.

Consent and Confidentiality

Only first names will be used in the interview, and all information shared in the interview will be
kept confidential and anonymized. In the final paper, the community archives will be mentioned

by name in the findings, but your individual identities, including your first names, will not.

The recording(s) will be used for analysis by me. If for some reason identifiable information is recorded, I will erase this information from the recording. I may be utilizing an outside party to transcribe the interviews from the recordings. If I choose to do so, I will require that this outside party also agree to refrain from sharing any of the information you provide to any individual except for me.

The recording(s) of the interviews will be stored temporarily on my personal hard drive, where it will not be shared publicly. Only I, as the Primary Investigator, will have access to the recordings.

The recordings will be destroyed at the conclusion of the study procedures, and this study will end no later than February 1, 2019.

The study's findings will not be published at the end of this research period. However, I can provide you with a copy of my final paper if you so desire, and you are welcome to contact me.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding participation, please contact me or my academic advisor above.

Appendix C

Descriptions of Community Archives in Sample

For greater context, the following descriptions of each of the community archives are provided below:

Bayside Historical Society (BHS)

Founded in 1964 and located at the Castle in Fort Totten, BHS is a local historical society dedicated to collecting, preserving, and disseminating information concerning the history of Bayside and its adjacent communities. In addition to being a resource for researchers and the community, as well as a venue for the visual and performing arts, BHS advocates for the preservation and protection of its most historic structures and distinctive neighborhoods through the landmarking process (Bayside Historical Society, "About," 2018). Its archival repository at the Castle houses artifacts, real and personal property of historical interest, records, material and ephemera which document the continuing growth, development and activities of the communities in Northeast Queens, including photographs, maps, oral histories, and more (Bayside Historical Society, "Collections," 2018). All trustees are volunteers at BHS, and, as active board members, they work in collaboration with paid staff, including the executive director and archivist.

Queens Memory Project (QMP)

QMP is an outreach-based community archiving program of the Queens Library that collects and makes accessible oral histories, photographs, and other personal records documenting contemporary life in Queens, New York. QMP was initially conceived in 2010 as part of project director Natalie Milbrodt's independent study while she was an archives fellow in Queens College's Graduate School of Library & Information Studies. She conducted thirteen

oral history interviews with her own neighbors in the 100-year-old Waldheim neighborhood in Flushing, Queens. After partnering with Queens College and the Archives at Queens Library, QMP successfully applied for a $25,000 collaborative digitization grant which established a foundation for the project's digital presence (Milbrodt & Schreiner, 2018). Through public scanning events, community members can have their personal photographs, documents, and memorabilia digitized and added to the Queens Memory digital collections. In addition to maintaining support from Queens Library and Queens College, QMP has had a successful track record of partnerships with other well-established institutions, local organizations, families, and individuals (Milbrodt & Schreiner, 2018). Natalie Milbrodt continues to be the director of the project, while various participants from Queens College and the local Queens community serve as volunteers.

ARChive of Contemporary Music (ARC)

Robert George (B. George), a former record producer and ARC's current director, and David Wheeler (1957–1997), a record collector and author with a masters degree in Library Science from Columbia University founded ARC in 1985. The initial donation was George's personal collection of 47,000 sound recordings accumulated through his work as a DJ, music producer, and author (ARChive of Contemporary Music, "Who we are," 2018). Located in the Tribeca neighborhood of Manhattan, ARC is a not-for-profit music archive, library, and research center that collects, preserves, and provides information on popular music throughout the world from 1950 to the present. It contains more than three million vinyl records in addition to photographs, videos, DVDs, books, magazines, press kits, sheet music, ephemera and memorabilia (ARChive of Contemporary Music, "What we do," 2018). Institutional partners include the Internet Archive, and there is a small paid staff. Volunteers and interns tend to be

Library and Information Science students who bring to the archive a knowledge of current

practice in addition to skills in archiving and digitization and this contributes to the

professionalization of ARC's services (Baker, 2016).

Lesbian Herstory Archives (LHA)

LHA is dedicated to preserving and nurturing the undocumented diversity of lesbian lives

by housing and preserving books, periodicals, unpublished papers, diaries, love letters,

conference proceedings, oral histories, CDs, vinyl, videos, films, photographs, graphics, zines, t-

shirts, banners, buttons, and other ephemera in an historic limestone building in Brooklyn, New

York, purchased entirely by contributions from LGBTQ communities (Thistlethwaite, 1991;

Smith-Cruz, et al., 2016). Collectively run since its founding in 1974, LHA was first opened in

the upper-west-side apartment of Joan Nestle and Deb Edel. Throughout its history, the

organization of the Archives has been informed by the perspectives, skills, and needs of its

volunteers and coordinators. As Shawn(ta) Smith-Cruz (2016) notes, LHA is "a record of a

volunteer community that has sustained engagement in lesbian life, political thought, and

activism, through adherence to its foundational principles" (Cruz-Smith, 2016, p. 214). This

organizational configuration has led to more than forty years of an "uncompromising grassroots

approach to volunteer participation from diverse lesbian communities" (Cruz-Smith, 2016, p.

214).

Interference Archive (IA)

IA began with the private collection Dara Greenwald and Josh MacPhee, individuals who

had amassed a large collection of social movement publications and ephemera after decades of

involvement in social movements and political art projects (Sellie et al., 2015). Located in a new

space in the Gowanus neighborhood of Brooklyn, Kevin Caplicki, Molly Fair, Dara Greenwald,

and Josh MacPhee founded IA in 2011. To cover operational costs, IA employs a sustainer

program, where over one hundred sustainers support the archive financially through donations of

$10 to $50 monthly, in addition to one-time donors and financial contributions from visiting

school groups (Gordon et al., 2018, para. 3). Self-identified as an activist archive, IA

distinguishes itself apart from collections in traditional institutions that archive activism—such

as the Tamiment Library at New York University—in that activist archives, such as IA, require

ongoing community involvement. Similar to LHA, IA is an all-volunteer run community archive

in which the users are often the contributors of archival materials, the community represented in

the collections, the stewards of the collections, the volunteers, the researchers, and the curators

(Sellie et al., 2015). As such, its organizational structures are reflections of the many social

movements represented in IA's collection—non-hierarchical, consensus-based groups from the

political left. Projects are managed through working groups, such as the administrative group, the

cataloging group, and the born-digital group, among others. Aside from working groups,

volunteers build shelves, catalog materials, and staff events (Gordon et al., 2018, para. 6).

Appendix D

Codebook for Analyzing Interview Data

1st Level Code (and applicable research question)	2nd Level Code	Definition
ENTRY/ ENGAGEMENT (RQ1)	Walk by	No previous personal relationship to community archive, engagement began due to noticing public-facing structure of archive and inquiring within
	Event	Engagement began with attendance at community archive-led event or exhibition
	Institutional referral	Engagement began with interaction with an individual working at a larger institution housing community archive, who provided referral to archive
	Civic engagement	Involvement with local groups and issues key to engagement (e.g. community board, parks, neighborhood issues)
	Friendship/social networks	Personal relationships key to entry and engagement
MOTIVATION (RQ2)	Interest in Research	Desire to connect with intellectual material from a variety of sources in order to reach conclusions to questions
	Diversifying and expanding access to historical resources	Seeking to uncover and share underrepresented histories
	Previous or Ongoing Volunteership	Prior or ongoing volunteer involvement in other endeavors which is related to their work with the community archive
	Political Views/Activism	Ideological beliefs related to demographics, identity concerns, individual prior experiences, personality, cultural context
	Passion for place/ physical location	Concern or affinity for physical place and surroundings, including the importance of a gathering space
	Genealogical/Familial Interests	Interested in learning more about family who live or lived in the community
	Retired/Spare time	Searching for opportunities to remain active during retirement
	Seeking professional opportunities	Volunteering seen as a path to gain professional experience or future employment
	Property Ownership	Motivated at least partially by increasing the property value of home located in the geographic community that defines the community archive

WORKFLOW DRIVERS	(No 2nd-level codes assigned)	An aspect of a community archive that appears to have possibly led to the work performed by the interview subject
WORK (RQ3)	Financial Management	Activities related to accounting and bookkeeping
	Fundraising	Activities related to direct solicitation of financial support from donors and potential donors
	Outreach	Activities related to representing the archive at events to community members in the neighborhood, collaborating with other local organizations, and, for some, staffing or keeping the doors open to the public
	Exhibition Planning	Activities related to the production of an exhibition
	Processing Collections	Activities related to organizing, cataloging, housing, and making collections accessible
	Training	Activities related to communicating workflow protocols
SKILLS (RQ4)	Administrative skills	Ability to organize and manage daily operations (i.e. inventory, scheduling, tracking, etc.)
	Financial management skills	Ability to manage the financial sustainability of the organization related to bookkeeping and accounting
	Event planning skills	Ability to organize planned public or social occasions, including mounting exhibitions and openings
	Communication skills	Ability to articulate vision and needs, conduct outreach, and facilitate solutions effectively among community members, with organizational partners, and the public; interpersonal skills, reference skills for collections
	Research skills	Ability to locate and appraise quality information and resources on a topic
	Storytelling skills	Ability to curate and bring together disparate elements of research and knowledge into a cohesive narrative
	Improvisational skills	Ability to be flexible, adaptable, and open to learning new skills.

Appendix E

Reported Motivations/Background and Entry Points of Engagement

Motivation/ Background	**Entry/Engagement**	
•Seeking professional experience (student) •Artistic/creative interests (casual music collector)	•Lives in neighborhood •Walked by	**Volunteered**

Figure 1. Description of Interview Subject #1's background and motivations for engaging with the community archive as well as the point of entry for engagement.

Motivation/ Background	**Entry/Engagement**	
•Property ownership •Passion for neighborhood tied to upbringing •Interest in research (history) •Previous or ongoing volunteership (civic group)	•Civic engagement with related groups	**Volunteered**

Figure 2. Description of Interview Subject #2's background and motivations for engaging with the community archive as well as the point of entry for engagement.

**Motivation/
Background**

•Passion for
neighborhood tied to
upbringing
•Previous or ongoing
volunteership (civic
groups, parks, co-op
board)
•Political views/
activism

Entry/Engagement
•Civic engagement
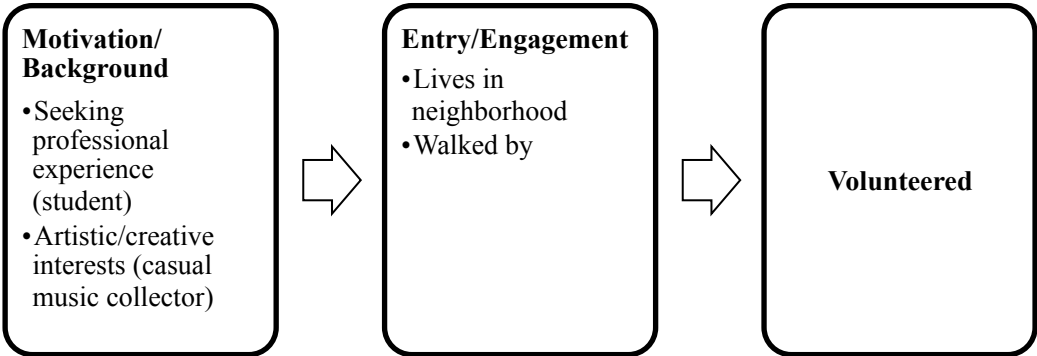with related groups

Volunteered

Figure 3. Description of Interview Subject #3's background and motivations for engaging with
the community archive as well as the point of entry for engagement.

Motivation/Background

•Curiosity about neighborhood
•Interest in research
•Retired/Spare Time
•Genealogical/familial interest
•Interest in community
improvement (sharing local
knowledge and strengthening ties
among neighbors)
•Political views/activism
•Previous or ongoing
volunteership (Church and
political group)

Entry/Engagement
•Attended event
(presentation/
outreach event given
by community
archive)

Volunteered

Figure 4. Description of Interview Subject #4's background and motivations for engaging with
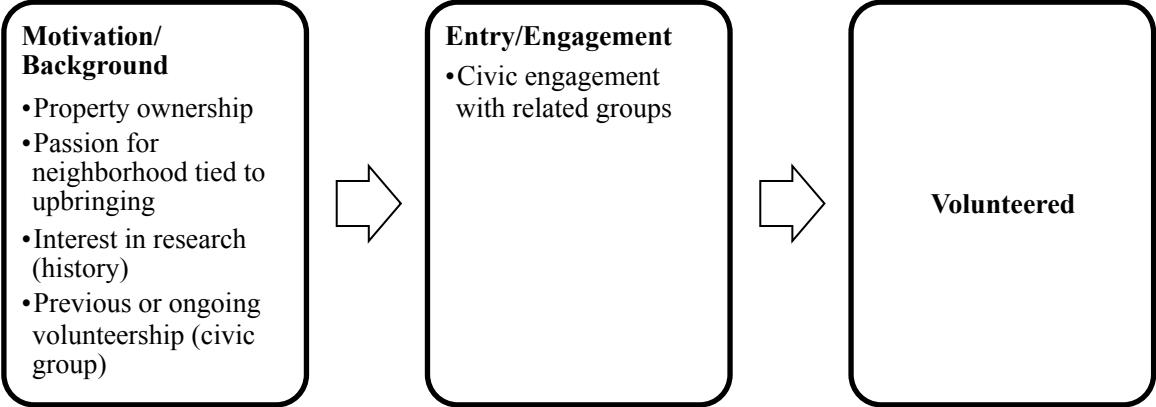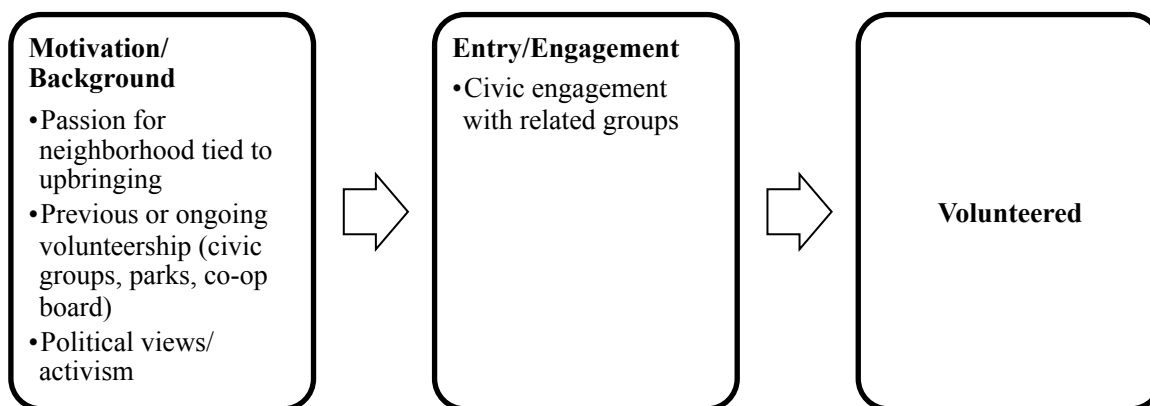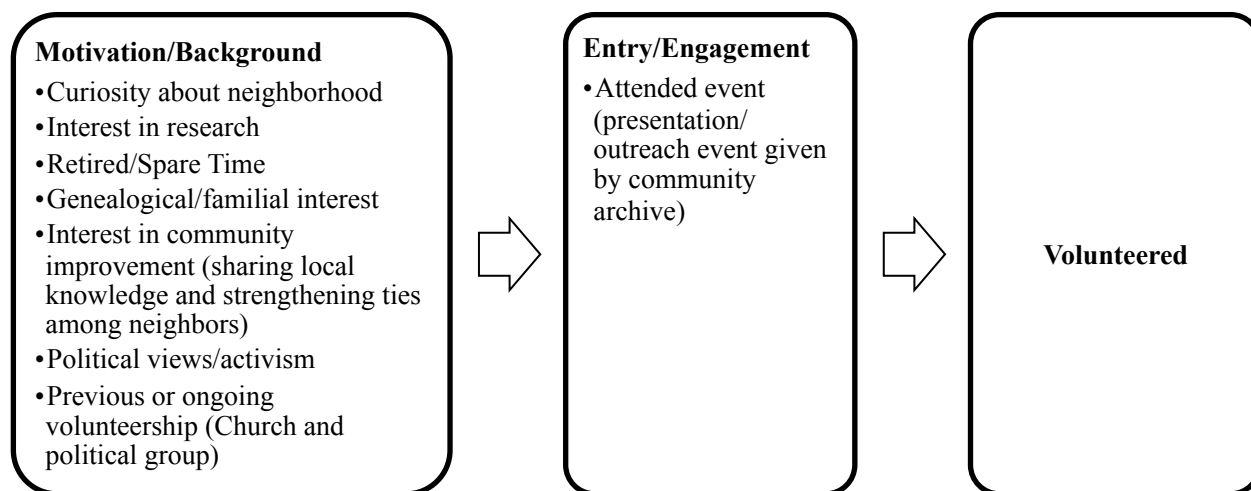the community archive as well as the point of entry for engagement.

Motivation/Background

- Curiosity about neighborhood
- Geneological/familial interest
- Interest in community improvement (public maintenance; environmental concern)
- Interest in research
- Seeking professional experience

Entry/Engagement

- Institutional Referral (visited a public library branch and spoke to librarian who referred her to volunteer)
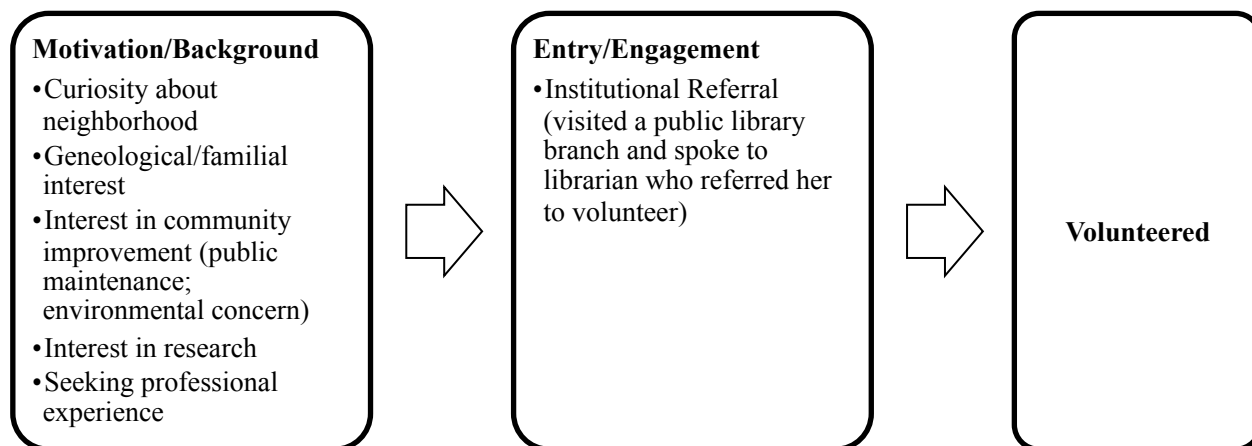
Volunteered

Figure 5. Description of Interview Subject #5's background and motivations for engaging with the community archive as well as the point of entry for engagement.
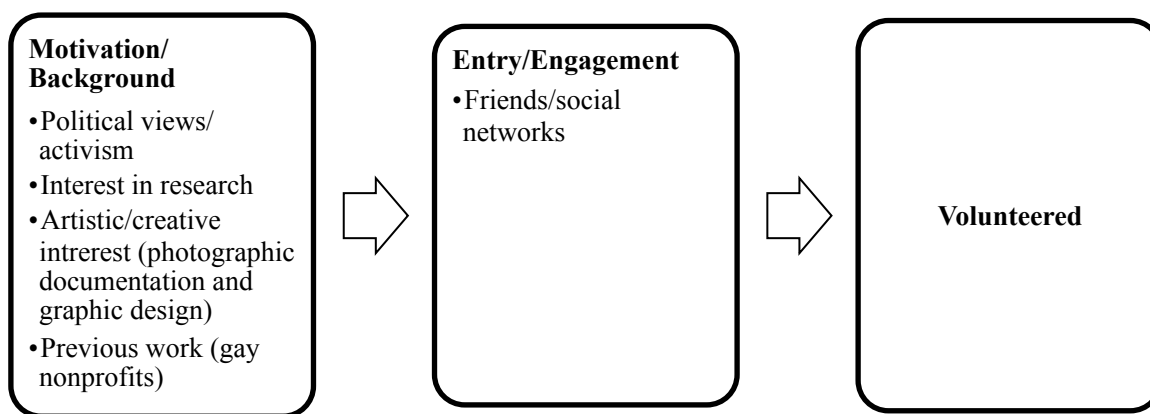
Motivation/ Background

- Political views/ activism
- Interest in research
- Artistic/creative intrerest (photographic documentation and graphic design)
- Previous work (gay nonprofits)

Entry/Engagement

- Friends/social networks

Volunteered

Figure 6. Description of Interview Subject #6's background and motivations for engaging with the community archive as well as the point of entry for engagement.
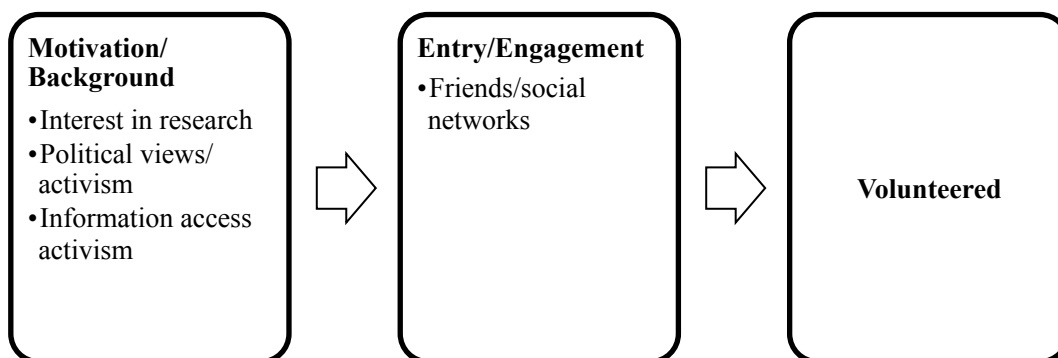
Motivation/ Background
- Interest in research
- Political views/ activism
- Information access activism

Entry/Engagement
- Friends/social networks

Volunteered

Figure 7. Description of Interview Subject #7's background and motivations for engaging with the community archive as well as the point of entry for engagement.
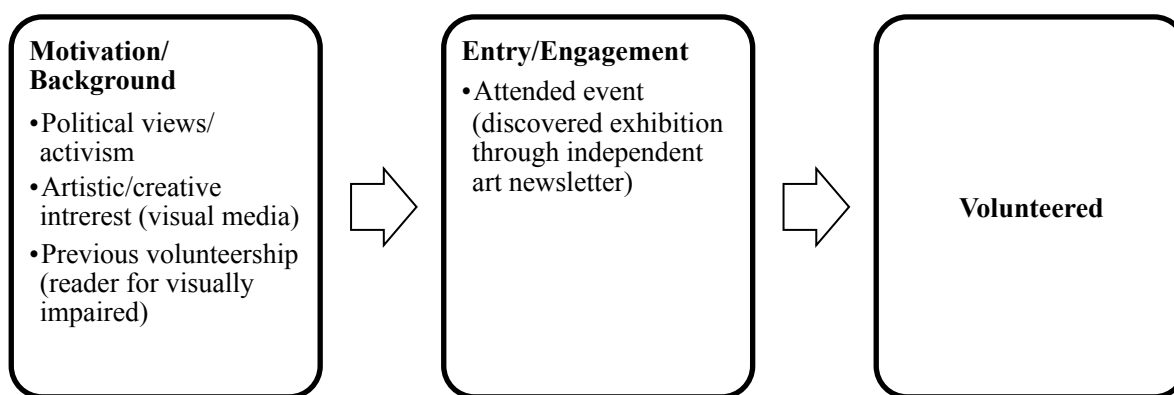
Motivation/ Background
- Political views/ activism
- Artistic/creative intrerest (visual media)
- Previous volunteership (reader for visually impaired)

Entry/Engagement
- Attended event (discovered exhibition through independent art newsletter)

Volunteered

Figure 8. Description of Interview Subject #8's background and motivations for engaging with the community archive as well as the point of entry for engagement.
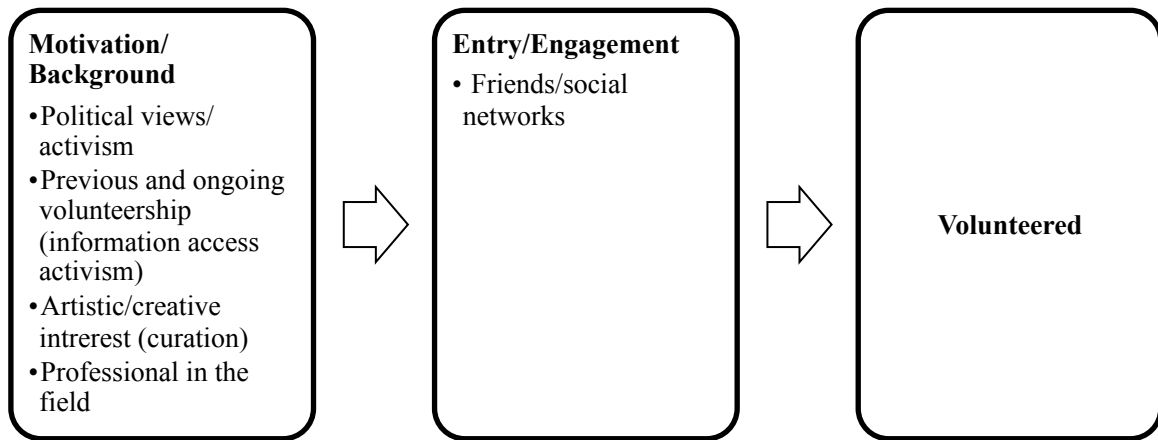
Motivation/
Background

•Political views/
 activism
•Previous and ongoing
 volunteership
 (information access
 activism)
•Artistic/creative
 intrerest (curation)
•Professional in the
 field

Entry/Engagement
• Friends/social
 networks

Volunteered

Figure 9. Description of Interview Subject #9's background and motivations for engaging with the community archive as well as the point of entry for engagement.