

FRAMEWORKS REVISITED: COMPREHENSIVE USER ASSESSMENT SYSTEM  
FOR THE MANUSCRIPTS DEPARTMENT AT THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH  
CAROLINA AT CHAPEL HILL

by  
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This paper examines current practices for creating user profiles for archive patrons and their information needs at the Manuscripts Department at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Archivists know their users informally and individually, but do not know the characteristics of the user community as a whole because they have no systematic tool for measuring this. Archivists cannot develop effective access and outreach programs because they have no empirical data to support their efforts. Inspired primarily by the work of Paul Conway, this study presents a comprehensive system to gather user information. The proposed system that emerged from the study utilizes and enhances current reference practices in order to gather data on patrons and their information needs. This includes the ever-growing demands of remote reference. The proposed system stands as a model for analysis and sharing of user information needs and use behavior between repositories of all sizes.

Headings:

Archives—Reference Services

User Surveys

## Table of Contents

Introduction	1
Literature Review	3
Manuscripts Department Data Collection	8
Methodology	10
Comprehensive Reference System	
Reader Registration Form	11
Addendum to Reader Registration Form	20
Research Room Log	20
Onsite Patron File	21
Survey	23
Conclusion	25
Bibliography	28
Appendix A	30
Appendix B	31
Appendix C	33
Appendix D	35
Appendix E	36
Appendix F	37
Appendix G	40
Appendix H	43
Appendix I	45
Appendix J	46

## Introduction

The archival enterprise is chiefly concerned with the both current and potential patrons. The tremendous efforts to create order and provide succinct descriptions of the holdings are expended in anticipation of patrons accessing the collection. Technology has enhanced and extended outreach, creating standards for delivering online finding aids and providing a new communications medium for interacting with remote patrons. Archivists continually endeavor to put the information in users' hands.<sup>1</sup>

Reference archivists are responsive to individual personalities and information needs as they occur. This narrow perspective of public service isolates the individual user from the larger archives user community. Many critics of current archival reference practices argue that archivists do not know their patrons because of this narrow perspective of reference service.<sup>2</sup> They further argue that if archivists do not examine researchers as a community, repositories will be unable to optimize the patron's research experience. Repeatedly, critics have called for a systematic tool for gathering and measuring user statistics.

In 1986, the *American Archivist* published Paul Conway's "Facts and Frameworks: An Approach to Studying the Users of Archives," a study of patrons and holdings usage at four presidential libraries. In this illuminating article, Conway provides

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<sup>1</sup> Timothy L. Erickson "Preoccupied with Our Own Gardens": Outreach and Archivists," *Archivaria* 31 (Winter 1990-1991), p. 117.

<sup>2</sup> The list of these authors is long and distinguished. While this concept will be developed further in the Literature Review, Mary Jo Pugh, Elsie Freeman, William Maher, and William Joyce are just a few of these critics.

a construct for reference that allows the administration to gather information on patrons practically and systematically. This framework examines quality, integrity and value over five stages of the reference experience to provide context for understanding users.<sup>3</sup>

Since this article was published, it has been cited as a landmark study in most texts that address archival reference and user studies. Many authors prior to 1986 sounded the call for a practical and standardized method of collecting and reporting information on users and information needs. Conway, however, was the first to deliver a system for comprehensive, systematic user profiling.<sup>4</sup> It is not simply the introduction of a data gathering construct but the actual testing of its effectiveness that makes Conway's study so important for archival reference.

Fifteen years have passed since this article was published and the argument for more user studies continues. Repositories neither adopted Conway's framework nor have they developed their own system of gathering user statistics. Usage measurements in annual reports are likely the result of a hand count of researchers accessing the collections and the number of items pulled during the fiscal year. Beyond this measurement, archives cannot provide concrete evidence regarding neither patron characteristics nor information needs.

This study examines how patron information is collected at the Manuscripts Department at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in order to optimize the system to gather information about users and their information needs. It is inspired by

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<sup>3</sup> Paul Conway. "Facts and Frameworks: An Approach to Studying the Users of Archives," *American Archivist* 49 (Fall 1986), pp. 393-407. See also: "Research in Presidential Libraries: A User Study," *The Midwestern Archivist*, 11 (1986), pp. 35-37.

<sup>4</sup> William J. Maher published "The Use of User Studies" which detailed the results of a user survey he conducted at the University of Illinois Archives in *The Midwestern Archivist* 11(1986), the same issue that Conway's "Research in Presidential Libraries" appeared. While he did not develop a construct for conducting user studies, this article points to the significant questions archivists should be asking and the limitations of user surveys.

the practicality and efficiency of the framework developed by Conway. While it revisits the construct in “Facts and Frameworks,” the system proposed here takes advantage of today’s information technology to facilitate user statistics.

### **Literature Review**

Reference or public service is rarely discussed in archival literature, especially when compared to the volume of articles written about other aspects of archival work such as arrangement and description. James Edward Cross states in “Archival Reference: State of the Art,”:

While the interest in and number of articles on reference have improved over what it once was prior to the mid-1980s, it still pales in comparison to other aspects of the archival endeavor, such as appraisal or arrangement and description. This holds true even when one acknowledges that writings on topics such as access, outreach and description often have something to say about reference as well.<sup>5</sup>

If articles on public services are few, articles devoted to user studies in archives are more rare. The authors of that do write on the subject only recommend that user studies be conducted, but do not offer guidelines to create and implement data gathering tools.

One of the first themes that emerges from the literature on user studies is that archivists do not know their patrons. Bruce W. Dearstyne states that archivists give little attention to their users, despite the ultimate goal of archives being to organize the historical record for use.<sup>6</sup> Elsie Freeman suggests that because archivists assume current reference practices are already gauged to the user, it does not occur to them to test their knowledge regarding who their patrons are and if they are serving their needs.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>5</sup>James Edward Cross. “Archival Reference: State of the Art,” *The Reference Librarian* 56 (1997), p. 11.

<sup>6</sup>Bruce W. Dearstyne. “What is the Use of Archives: A Challenge for the Profession,” *American Archivist* 50 (Winter 1987), p. 77.

<sup>7</sup>Elsie T Freeman. “‘In the Eye of the Beholder’: Archives Administration from the User’s Point of View,” *American Archivist* vol. 2(47) p. 112.

Archivists rely on intuition to guide them, says Diane L. Beattie, not from collecting supportive data on users.<sup>8</sup> Gabrielle Blais and David Enns state that the informality of archival reference services prevents archivists from gaining any specific knowledge about the patrons, their information needs, or their approach to the material.<sup>9</sup> It isn't simply that there are no tools in place to gather information about the user. The problem is that archivists do not understand the need to evaluate the user community and their needs in the first place.<sup>10</sup>

Other authors claim that archivists do have very specific ideas about who comprises their user community, but they do not use that information effectively. David Bearman argues in *Archival Methods* and again in "Archival Strategies" that "most potential users of archives don't" and "those who do use archives are not the users we prefer."<sup>11</sup> On archivists and their understanding of patrons, Erickson notes the following:

We know, for example, circumstances that will bring them into the archives and also what types of materials they likely will want to use; we simply do not use that information effectively.<sup>12</sup>

It matters little what reference archivists believe they know about users and their information needs because they do not have the empirical data to support their beliefs.

Such statements can be found throughout the literature. William J. Maher claims that

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<sup>8</sup> Diane L. Beattie. "An Archival User Study: Researchers in the Field of Women's History," *Archivaria* 29 (Winter 1989-1990), p. 38.

<sup>9</sup> Blais, Gabrielle and David Enns. "From Paper Archives to People Archives: Public Programming in the Management of Archives," *Archivaria* 31 (Winter 1990-1991), p. 108.

<sup>10</sup> Freeman, p. 114.

<sup>11</sup> David Bearman "Archival Strategies," *American Archivist* 58 (Fall 1995), p. 385.

<sup>12</sup> Erickson, p. 120.

archivists' understanding of patrons is "sketchy at best," while David Bearman says that archivists know "virtually nothing" about the community they serve.<sup>13</sup>

According to Elsie Freeman:

Our information on who our users are is spotty because not much statistical information appears to be kept, nor is it disseminated when it is compiled. That is in itself stunning given our frequent references to the historians/scholars who we say are our users.<sup>14</sup>

The informal approach to archival reference, as mentioned above, does not allow for the systematic assessment of users and information needs. Blais and Enns state:

The absence of careful planning and delivery of archival information services (modern reference work) has taken away valuable opportunities to obtain the user response that is essential if we are to ensure that the information needs of our clients are met.<sup>15</sup>

Freeman claims that archivists do not make a serious effort to learn how users discover material nor how users approach their research and archival materials.<sup>16</sup> Beattie states that although archivists understand that users change over time, they do not document the change in information needs empirically. She concurs with Freeman, stating that little research has been done on what patrons use and how those materials are located.<sup>17</sup>

In order to understand our users and better serve their information needs, archives and manuscript collections must conduct user studies. "Archivists," writes Lawrence Dowler, "need a better understanding of who uses archives and for what purposes, and of which theories and techniques are most suited to facilitating use and satisfying most users

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<sup>13</sup>William J Maher. "The Use of User Studies," *The Midwestern Archivist* 1(11) 1986, p. 13. David Bearman, "Archival Strategies," *American Archivist* 58 (Fall 1995), p. 409.

<sup>14</sup> Freeman, p. 114.

<sup>15</sup> Blais and Enns, p. 108.

<sup>16</sup> Freeman, p. 113.

<sup>17</sup> Beattie, p. 34, 38, and 39.



over time.”<sup>18</sup> Richard Cox claims that user studies are of interest to archivists because they can be used to advocate programming, justify resource allocation, and provide understanding on the effectiveness of other archival functions such as arrangement and description.<sup>19</sup> According to David Bearman, “We should study our users to understand how they approach archives and develop information systems to meet them there.” This better understanding of users and use of holdings will help archive administration to justify not only the existence to the archive but also justify the resources required to meet user needs.<sup>20</sup> Maher says that while one may hate to admit it, “archivists exist within a utilitarian society, and they must be able to demonstrate that what they are doing is worthwhile.”<sup>21</sup> Paul Conway points out that by identifying systematically physical use of archival materials, archivists can better evaluate and plan their programs while substantiating the services they provide.<sup>22</sup> Blais and Enns state the goals of user studies in this fashion.

A greater understanding of users and use would inform and focus all public programming activities and could be the core of a new, more synergetic relationship between the archival functions of acquisition, appraisal, selection, arrangement, and description and public programming. It would, in addition, increase research involvement and participation in our activities.

The argument for conducting user studies in order to support archival administration decision-making is a valid one. It is not, however, the primary reason for user studies. Roy C. Turnbaugh describes the point of users studies in archives as helping staff keep in touch with reality.

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<sup>18</sup> Lawrence Dowler. “The Role of Use in Defining Archival Practice and Principles: A Research Agenda for the Availability and Use of Records,” *American Archivist* 57 (Winter/Spring 1988) p. 75.

<sup>19</sup>Richard J. Cox. “Researching Archival Reference as an Information Function: Observations on Needs and Opportunities,” *Reference Quarterly* (Spring 1992), p. 389.

<sup>20</sup> Bearman, p. 385.

<sup>21</sup> Maher, p. 13.

<sup>22</sup> Paul Conway. “Facts and Frameworks: An Approach to Studying the Users of Archives,” *American Archivist* 49 (Fall 1986) p. 398.

In a general sense, the point of user studies is to help an archives develop an atmosphere of realism on the part of staff, to teach it to cope with situations as they are rather than as they might be or as one would like them to be... User studies will and should identify users and the records being used. Consequently, these studies can help an administrator bring into focus that part of an institution's identity which is shaped by reference use. If the resulting portrait is unsatisfactory, user studies can provide some of the information necessary to begin to reshape an identity.<sup>23</sup>

Dowler concurs with Turnbaugh, crediting user studies as a “periodic check” for the effectiveness of archival programs.”<sup>24</sup>

Although there is evidence to suggest that repositories are collecting some form of data on users and holdings usage, Dearstyne suggests that archival programs have been complacent in systematically keeping track of users and research use. Manuals on reference services suggest what type of information about users and research should be recorded, they do not provide guidance on interpreting and reporting the data.

It isn't enough to simply study users without a sense of purpose and without taking a systematic approach to gathering data. According to Dearstyne, archivists must

Address fundamental questions, heretofore largely ignored about the relationship between archivists and researchers and about the nature and significance of research use of archival materials.

He goes on to say that archivists will learn little about the significance and impact of research use by simply counting users under preconceived categories.<sup>25</sup> David Bearman elaborates on the significance of conducting such research by stating, “Whatever we measure, it must be related to what we want to achieve.”<sup>26</sup>

Why is it so difficult to design and implement user studies if it is important to understand users and information needs? In part, this refers back to the unsystematic

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<sup>23</sup> Roy C. Turnbaugh. “Archival Mission and User Studies,” *The Midwestern Archivist* 1(11) 1986, p. 30.

<sup>24</sup> Dowler, p. 77.

<sup>25</sup> Bruce W. Dearstyne, “What is the *Use* of Archives?” p. 79.

<sup>26</sup> Bearman, p. 396.

approach to gathering data on patrons. Each repository gathers data according to what is most important to that facility. Barbara L. Craig discusses the difficulties of conducting user studies, stating that they are “neither easy to conceptualize nor simple and inexpensive to do.” She points that because there is no guarantee that the results of user studies will actually lead to improved public services, it is difficult to garner support for such an undertaking.<sup>27</sup>

### **Manuscripts Department Data Collection**

The Manuscripts Department at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill is comprised of the Southern Historical Collection and General and Literary Manuscripts, the Southern Folklife Collection, and the University Archives. It was chosen as the site for this study mainly due to its reputation as one of the largest repositories of southern Americana worldwide. Another factor in selection was its dedication to embracing technology in order to provide better access to the research community. Finally, it is this author’s experience at its reference desk that created my interest in learning how better to serve the user community.

The Manuscripts Department does collect data on patrons and holdings usage. Most of the information about the patrons is gathered from the Reader Registration Forms that all researchers must complete before accessing the collection, including remote patrons. If a researcher is onsite, they are requested to sign the daily register. This information contributes to the monthly usage statistics. The Research Room Log is analyzed for more specific information regarding what materials are actually used by patrons.

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<sup>27</sup> Barbara L. Craig. “Old Myths in New Clothes: Expectations of Archives Users,” *Archivaria* p. 124.

Despite the reference staff's efforts to measure user information in some manner, the department's annual reports are little more than a tally of patrons and collection usage. The annual reports for the department only present the count of patrons and number of reference requests received each year despite conducting the internal data collection as described above. For example, in fiscal year 1997-1998, it was reported that 2,101 registrants made use of the collection during actual visits to the department. The report notes the continued increase in the number of remote researchers evidenced by a total of 5,629 reference requests received via electronic media during that year.<sup>28</sup> Subsequent annual reports provide similar activity counts, showing that remote usage continued to grow with 5,855 remote inquiries made to the department in fiscal year 1998-1999 and 8,536 remote requests in fiscal year 1999-2000.<sup>29</sup> One can see from these annual reports that the Manuscripts Department has some idea of the size of its user community. The Manuscripts Department, however, neither reports categorical information from the Reader Registration Forms nor from the Research Room Log.

For any repository, the primary purpose of the Reader Registration Form is to provide security to the unique holdings in the department by gathering as much information about the users as possible before they access the collection. The Manuscripts Department's Reader Registration Form lists the rules and procedures for the collection and requires a signature acknowledging understanding of and compliance with the rules. Once this form is completed and the patron applies his/her signature, a photographic identification card is copied directly onto the corner of the form. This form

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<sup>28</sup> Timothy D. Pyatt. The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Manuscripts Department Annual Report, 1997-1998. <http://www.lib.unc.edu/mss/anrep9798.htm>. The author gratefully acknowledges Tim Pyatt for his encouragement during this study.

<sup>29</sup> Pyatt, Annual Report, 1998-1999, <http://www.lib.unc.edu/mss/anrep9899.htm> and Annual Report, 1999-2000, <http://www.lib.unc.edu/mss/anrep9899.htm>.

stays on file for approximately five years and will be updated should a patron visit on a later occasion.

Understand the user's information needs is another purpose for the Reader Registration Form. The Manuscripts Department's Reader Registration Form is divided into sections that solicit information about the patron, the patron's research needs, how the patron approached his/her research, and what the patron anticipates doing with his/her research. It was this function of the form that led to this study.

### **Methodology**

The present study is the result of an earlier user study based at the Manuscripts Department. It was the author's intention to examine the Reader Registration Forms from two separate years in order to discover if distinct user profiles emerged. It became apparent, however, through analyzing the forms that they did not contain enough information to create such profiles. This led to a redesign of the form in order to create a method to gather more useful data regarding users and information needs as well as creating other elements for an overall user assessment system.

The previous attempted to build a user profile from Reader Registration Forms from 1997 to 2000. Frankly, the results of the earlier study were neither dynamic nor descriptive. At first, the assumption was that the tool for measuring patron responses was incorrectly constructed. After much wrestling with the design of the data collection tool and the results that were generated, the conclusion was that the nature of the questions being asked of the patrons did not elicit enough information to create anything more than a generic profile of the Manuscripts Department's user community. Once that was discovered, there was no need to continue trying to work with this form.

The focus of study shifted from the data generated on the forms to how the form could be improved to solicit information in more specific terms. Other aspects of the reference process were analyzed to see how they could be captured and evaluated in tools for measuring user characteristics and information needs, although the Reader Registration Form continues to be the primary focus of the study. The following presents a comprehensive user assessment construct for gathering information about patrons and their information needs.

### **Comprehensive User Assessment**

#### ***Reader Registration Form***

As every researcher must complete a Reader Registration Form in order to access the collection, the redesign of the form is the most crucial part of this study. All other elements in the proposed framework cannot capture the information as well as the Reader Registration Form. The other parts of the framework function to confirm the information generated by the form. The form to be revised in this study was used by the Manuscripts Department until June 2001.<sup>30</sup> Analysis of the form is divided by section in order to clearly convey commentary and alterations made to the form. Please see Appendix A to view the first reader registration form and Appendix B for the revised version.

#### ***Patron Personal Information***

The first section of the new form concerns the patron's personal information, with categories such as Name, Date, Address, Phone, and ZIP. The first addition to this section is the Archives Identification number. This was added in anticipation of the conversion from the paper form to an electronic form. Until electronic signature

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<sup>30</sup> The new Head of Public Services, Laura Clark Brown, made some insightful revisions to the form. Her nurturing mentorship has been invaluable to the author and her friendship is priceless.

technology is improved and is more widely available, the Reader Registration Form will be printed for the patron to sign and date. However, the data from the form should be entered into a database in order to analyze information about specific user groups.

Assigning patrons identification numbers is a common practice at larger repositories and will be necessary for the database system to function properly.

Another addition to this section asks how the patron initially contacted the department. The options for this question are Onsite, Email, Telephone, FAX, and Surface Mail. This question was designed to see how a researcher first approached the Manuscripts Collection. Results from this question help create an accurate count of how patrons contact the department, and provide support for resource investment and improved services.

A line for the patron's email address was added after the traditional contact information. This is to encourage dialog between the archivist and the researcher should information surface after the patron has concluded his/her research. It may also help facilitate other services, such as the duplication process, through speedier communication.

A space to indicate both current and permanent contact information is a useful addition to the form. As the Manuscripts Department is an academic institution on a large, state university campus, many patrons who utilize the collections are transitory. A distinction regarding address allows the department to measure usage specifically by locality and thus assist the administration to make informed decisions regarding outreach programming.

*Institutional Affiliation*

On the first reader registration form, Institutional Affiliation was a fill-in question only. From the abandoned user study it became obvious that patrons did not understand the question. The Manuscripts Department asks this question in order to find out what cultural or academic institutions are benefiting from the collection, although the patron may not be conducting research in conjunction with said institution. Sometimes this section was left blank, only to be followed by a related answer in the next section, Academic Status. One example of this is when the Institutional Affiliation line would be blank and the Undergraduate option of the Academic Status section was marked. The situation in reverse happened just as often; both cases invalidate user statistics.

Specific examples of institutions were added to this section to make analysis easier. There is a space for the name and location of the institution, followed by the instruction to choose the most appropriate option. The following are the options listed: UNAFFILIATED; UNC-CH; UNC-SYSTEM; STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA; UNIVERSITY; COLLEGE; COMMUNITY OR TECHNICAL COLLEGE; SCHOOL; MUSEUM; LIBRARY; HISTORICAL SOCIETY. If a patron wishes to indicate an institution not addressed by the above categories, there is space available in which to add the institution.

#### *Academic Status*

As presented on the old form, this section perpetuated the assumption that only scholars utilize the archives and manuscript collections. It ignored the population that conducts work related research, genealogical research, or those who are just plain curious. The entire section was revised in order to make it inclusive of all users and to create meaningful statistics.



A new heading for this section was necessary to capture relevant information. Finding a succinct term proved problematic. The first term considered for the revision was “vocation,” but that seemed to create a narrow focus on employment. Students and retirees may feel left out under that heading. Then “avocation,” was debated, but ruled out with consideration that most researchers would object to their work being deemed as recreational only. Although lacking any hint of creativity, but certainly inclusive, the heading *Researcher Status* was decided on for this section.

Choosing such a section heading demanded that more options be added, with the instructions that the patron choose the one category that was most appropriate. The choices for UNDERGRADUATE, GRADUATE STUDENT, FACULTY and STAFF remain as they are. Technology and the Internet allow the Manuscripts Department to reach an audience worldwide. The categories added to this section recognize potential new users, adding to the headings reserved for the traditional researchers. These new options are:

ELEMENTARY, HIGH SCHOOL, INSTRUCTOR, ASSISTANT, EMERITUS, INDEPENDENT RESEARCHER, CONTRACT RESEARCHER, JOURNALIST, GENEALOGIST AND CULTURAL HERITAGE PROFESSIONAL (curator, docent, archivist, etc.) and OTHER. There is space available by OTHER and CULTURAL HERITAGE PROFESSIONAL to write in their status.

Of particular importance is the addition of GENEALOGIST. The collections held by the Manuscripts Department is organized and developed for more scholarly use, and is not the best place to begin genealogical research. Regardless, genealogists use this collection for their research.<sup>31</sup> With the Manuscripts Department’s presence on the Internet, it is likely that more genealogists will contact or visit the department in the

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<sup>31</sup> Personal experience gives the author some idea the extent of genealogical research at the Manuscripts Department. However, since there is no systematic method to gather user statistics, no claims regarding their number can be substantiated.

future. Thus, it is important to include this category in order to understand patrons and their user needs.

Another question added to this section, “Are you a UNC-CH Alumnus?” provides information regarding service to the University of North Carolina community. Part of the Manuscripts Department’s mission is to serve the people of the state of North Carolina. More importantly, as a part of the campus at Chapel Hill, the department supports the research for a specific user community. Learning more about how the department serves University of North Carolina students at any point in their lives provides information on how to improve services. It could also provide outreach opportunities with various university departments and collaboration with university alumni associations for possible funding opportunities.

#### *How Did You Learn About Our Holdings?*

The title of this next section is a bit wordy, but the question is of utmost importance. As the Manuscripts Department continues to invest resources into creating EAD finding aids and improving access through its Internet presence, statistical evidence generated from patrons’ responses attempts to demonstrate the effectiveness of such efforts. If analyzed and interpreted correctly, this data could have a major impact on internal planning.

There are two problems with the section on the old form that prevents relevant statistical analysis. First, the form listed some methods of discovering the Manuscripts Department, but listed them in generic terminology that does not allow tracking of information-seeking behavior. Also, some terms are outdated, such as the option for CARD CATALOG. The second problem is that the patron could check any category that

they used without any distinction as to usefulness. There was no way the patron could indicate what method of discovery was the most beneficial or least helpful.

Options that remained as they were include CITATION IN PUBLISHED WORK, WORD OF MOUTH, ONLINE CATALOG, AND INSTRUCTOR. CARD CATALOG was eliminated as a category due to automation at most libraries. Also the fact that other libraries, even other library departments at UNC, would not have information on the collection in their card catalogs anyway eliminates it as a possible option.<sup>32</sup> Several categories were altered to be more specific. PRINTED GUIDE became *GUIDE TO THE SOUTHERN HISTORICAL COLLECTION*, a twenty-year old text that is rarely used at the Manuscripts Department reference desk. However, some older scholars rely on and some libraries may still have in circulation. *NATIONAL UNION CATALOG OF MANUSCRIPTS COLLECTIONS* was altered to distinguish between the older, printed version and the online version. REFERRAL also split into two categories, REFERRAL BY UNC LIBRARY DEPARTMENT and REFERRAL BY OTHER. REFERRAL BY OTHER permits space after for the patron to fill in that information, which could include another library or could refer to other cultural heritage professionals.

The most relevant change from the old form concerned the option for WORLD WIDE WEB (INTERNET). This question is intended to gather data regarding the department's web presence. This option as it appears on the old form does not allow the patron to indicate exactly how his/her Internet use led to the discovery of the collection. For instance, the patron could have found the collection from the Manuscripts Department web page or an Internet search engine. The revised form alleviates ambiguity by dividing WORLD WIDE WEB (INTERNET) into specific options to determine

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<sup>32</sup> The one exception to this rule may be the card catalog in the North Carolina Collection, Wilson Library, the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Their card catalog is used extensively and might hold some reference to an individual item in the Manuscripts Department.

patron web use to find repositories and primary documentation. The revised form provides the following options to regarding patron use of the Internet: MANUSCRIPTS DEPARTMENT HOME PAGE; INTERNET SEARCH ENGINE, with space to indicate which engine was used; OTHER WEB PAGE, with a space to give that information.<sup>33</sup>

Additional categories for the *How Did You Learn About Our Holdings* section are EXHIBIT, ARCHIVES USA, WORLD CAT, RLIN, and OTHER.

Three questions were added to the end of this section in order to understand not only how the researcher conducted his/her search but also to measure the success of the search. The first two are concerned with the usefulness of the methods listed for finding the collection. The results from the questions regarding the most helpful method and least helpful method of discovering the department could help administration establish priorities about improving description and access.

Subject Search Terms allows the patron to list under what terms he/she conducted his/her research prior to contacting or visiting the department. This question is important for several reasons. First, seeing the terms the patron used, whether successful or not, allows the reference archivist to conduct research that is pertinent to the patron's needs, not a repetition of the research the patron already conducted. This should help optimize the user's time with the materials. Second, having the patron list the subject terms gives the reference archivist insight into what concepts the patron believes are the most important aspects of their research. The phraseology and the order in which the heading are listed will likely give a clue of how the researcher prioritized his/her words in order to find relevant collections. Finally, listing the subject terms will help the reference

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<sup>33</sup> There is a second benefit for soliciting information about other Internet sources: possible copyright infringement.

archivist understand what other resources may be more suited or would augment the user's researcher.

### *Research Purpose*

This section needed alterations both in structure and in terminology in order to make the section useful. The first problem was that types of research coexisted with possible research outcomes. This is illogical, especially since there is another section for research output that follows this section. To solve this problem, CLASS PROJECT, THESIS, AND DISSERTATION were moved from the *Research Purpose* section to the *Publications/Research Outcomes* section.

The next problem was the ambiguity of some of the types of research. HISTORICAL RESEARCH and GENEALOGICAL RESEARCH are specific and require no alterations. However, it is unclear exactly what LITERARY RESEARCH, PICTORIAL RESEARCH, and FOLKLORE/DISCOGRAPHICAL RESEARCH mean. For example, literary research is the study of a particular author or a specific title, likely for academic purposes. Literary research can also be the study of a particular subject as research for an original piece of fiction. Both can be counted in the same category but are altogether different research purposes. CREATIVE WRITING RESEARCH and CREATIVE ARTS RESEARCH have been added to this section to make clear the distinction between the different types of research.

There are two problems concerning the UNIVERSITY ARCHIVES option in this section. From the abandoned user study, it appeared that some patrons indicated a research subject concerning university history, but they did not mark UNIVERSITY ARCHIVES in *Research Purpose*. This oversight is likely due to University Archives'

position following the HISTORICAL RESEARCH option. However, the problem could be that the word “Administrative” hints at a more specific type of research, one that some patrons utilizing the archives will not be conducting. Thus UNIVERSITY ARCHIVES and UNIVERSITY ARCHIVES ADMINISTRATIVE RESEARCH are both listed as research purposes and have been moved before HISTORICAL RESEARCH to alleviate any confusion. This rearrangement will allow a more accurate measure of University Archives utilization.

*Other Changes to Reader Registration*

There are only a few remaining changes left to mention, all of which are minor. The first change concerns *Research Director/Class Instructor (if any)*. AFFILIATION and DEPARTMENT were added to INSTRUCTOR NAME in order to measure what other institutions might benefit from improved access. For example, if a user indicated that his/her research was an assignment for a professor at Duke, the Head of Public Services could collaborate with that instructor on future class assignments.

To record patron dissemination plans, whether published or as an extension of academic work, *Publication Plans* was renamed *Publications/Research Outcomes*. As was stated previously, CLASS PROJECT, THESIS AND DISSERTATION were moved to this section. Those options are joined by two other additions, JOURNAL ARTICLE and EXHIBIT. JOURNAL ARTICLE was added as a measure of information dissemination by newspapers or other non-academic, as opposed to ARTICLE, which is indicative of academic writing. The results could demonstrate the extent of research conducted at the Manuscripts Department for non-academic purposes. The EXHIBITS category captures collection dissemination by other culture institutions.

***Addendum to Reader Registration Form***

Appendix C is an addendum to the Reader Registration Form to capture information on a patron's subsequent visits. This form will help update the patron's personal information, but its primary benefit is to identify how a patron's information needs and behaviors change over time. It is also an excellent method for reorienting the researcher to the department's policies and procedures and reacquaints the research with staff members. Although altered to capture only pertinent new information, its design is a close match to the original reader registration form.

### ***Reading Room Log***

Although there is no set standard for recording this information, most repositories log the materials used from the collection during the business day in some manner. The Manuscripts Department collects holdings use information by recording information from call slips and from the daily usage log. The reference staff lists the patron's name, collection number, the initials of the staff that pulled the collection, and the box(es), file(s), or volume(s) the patron requested to view. If the patron requested an item from University Archives, that is indicated in the space for collection number. There is a space on the form for the date that the material was re-filed and the initials for the staff that did the re-filing. Please see Appendix D for the Research Room Log currently used.

This form does not need altering as it already records pertinent information, namely overall collection use. There is one policy change that is necessary for recording the specific use of a collection over time. The requested material for a specific patron is recorded when the material is pulled and is not logged again unless the material has been re-filed and requested again. If a patron places the material on hold, there is no way to indicate which day the material was actually used. Also, if material is requested for a

student assignment, it is not usually logged in at all, neither when it is pulled nor when the students actually use the material. From these examples, it is apparent that the system is not truly recording daily use, but recording items pulled for generic usage statistics. This is a problem because the statistics this form generates an illusion of overall holdings use. Administration cannot make informed decisions about collection use, or, more importantly, collection importance from the data generated from the form as policy stands now.

Although there are many approaches to solving this dilemma, this author advocates that only the material used in the Reading Room be recorded on the log. The material should be logged in every time it is in the Reading Room, regardless of how many times an individual patron views it. While this is more time consuming than recording the items all at once, the specific use of the collection becomes clearer. An additional benefit of recording use in this manner is that staff may detect a patron's research methodology from his/her use patterns, thus adapting reference techniques for optimum research results.

### ***Onsite Patron File***

The informal nature of archival reference work makes for a congenial atmosphere for reference staff and the patrons. Staff responds to a patron's needs as they develop almost like an involuntary reaction. This is not to imply that there is no thought behind the response, but that the patron's need is satisfied and the crisis likely is forgotten. For some interactions, such as helping the patron make sense of an older finding aid, there is no need to give it a second thought. For other interactions, such as a patron's expression



of disappointment at not finding what they were seeking, it may be beneficial to create a record of those types of interactions with patrons.

The information recorded about the patron's reference and research experience could include unanswered questions about a collection or related material, a note regarding a correction in a finding aid suggested by the patron, or a comment on the department's online resources. Of particular interest would be the patron's comments about public service. All of this information could supply administration with data on how patrons use the collection and how that service might be improved.

Appendix D is the proposed Onsite Patron Form. There is space for the patron's name, their archives ID, the date, the staff member's initials, and space to indicate the collection number if necessary to the comment. There is space for staff to record the note or comment followed by room to document any follow up actions and the date when that follow-up was concluded.

The form is important not only to document the more difficult reference interactions, but also as a form of knowledge management. Archivists are renown for having incredible memories, not only about their collections but also their patrons. When the archivist moves on, however, a valuable resource for the repository is lost. This is an attempt to harness some of that knowledge for future use.

It may not be necessary to use a form for every patron that uses the collection. Student groups that need only ask for what their professor has requested may not have any comments about the material or the service they receive. For remote patrons, the hardcopy of the email, letter or the form that records the remote reference request can be used to record patron comments. This form should only be used when the need arises.

When the form is completed, signaled by the end of the patron's research at the Manuscripts Department, the staff member should give the form to the Head of Public Service for review. The Head of Public Services reviews the form upon receipt to eliminate the possibility of forgetting the context of the comments on the form, and then collects all the forms for analysis at the end of the fiscal year. Comments regarding service can be reported to library administration in the annual report, while more specific examples, such as complaints regarding policies or errors in finding aids, can be addressed and resolved in-house.

### *Surveys*

As was noted elsewhere in this study, Conway claims that archivists become apprehensive about conducting surveys. Although the Reader Registration form collects a great deal of relevant information regarding the patron, it does not measure the success of patron research. Surveys are necessary to gather information not only on the patron's research in the department but also to for insight regarding the remote researcher's experience. . Appendix E and F are surveys that attempt to gather information on overall public service.

Appendix E contains a survey for those patrons that visit the department to conduct their research. Questions on the survey are designed to measure user satisfaction. Questions are not limited to public services but attempt to measure how confidently the patron conducted their research. The survey also attempts to measure patron expectations, such as what volume of material was expected on the subject. There is space available at the end of the survey for patrons' comments.

Everyone who visits the department should be given a survey to complete in order to get the largest sample possible. Unlike the reader registration form, the survey is optional and it is hard to predict how many patrons will complete the survey. It is preferable to have the patron complete the survey before they leave the department. This ensures that the patron's impressions about their experience are not distorted by time. Completing the form in the department also encourages the user to complete the survey, avoiding the risk that the researcher will forget to complete it and return it to the department. It is acceptable, but not ideal, for the patron to take the survey with them to complete and return later.

Appendix F is a survey designed for remote patrons. It recognizes that although remote users may want the same types of services, they have different needs and expectations than onsite researchers. There are fewer questions asked of the remote patron and they concern patron satisfaction with public services. This is because the reference services provided for remote users are usually very narrow. There are fewer opportunities to offer research assistance in most cases.<sup>34</sup> Of particular interest is how satisfied the patron is with staff response time in answering the initial inquiry.

At the close of the fiscal year, all surveys should be analyzed and the results included in the annual report. It is advised that the surveys be kept segregated into the onsite surveys and remote surveys to generate the most accurate results regarding the patron's research experience. The administration can enact immediate policies changes in areas that patrons indicated dissatisfaction and continue to collection data on areas that might require improvement in the future.

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<sup>34</sup> This is based on the author's experience with departmental email. Most email reference requests can be categorized as photocopy requests. The department receives so many of these requests that the author sarcastically refers to this as the "Kinko's of Cultural Heritage."

## Conclusion

The user assessment system lends itself well to a database environment. When Conway's study was published fifteen years ago, technology was not readily available to support a comprehensive user assessment construct. Today, almost all computer systems support a database software packages and could support the proposed system.

Maintaining these records electronically is particularly beneficial because it facilitates fast and easy sorting and analysis of information. One way in which this can be done is creating a count of users, a measurement already found in departmental annual reports. The difference is the counts can be conducted more quickly and accurately than the traditional practice of creating a tally. Another benefit of the database system is the ability to create queries that will quickly retrieve information regarding particular user groups. For example, the archivist could utilize the system to discover the way most patrons learned about the holdings for genealogical research and which search technique worked best for that purpose.

The ability to track patron behavior via the database enhances security of the collection. Knowing that the department is meticulously keeping track of users and materials will help deter would-be thieves or vandals. It will also help staff locate items that are missing. Staff would need only to query the *Reading Room Log* database to see what materials were used the same day that the missing material was last requested. They could then be sure the material was not misfiled. If a misfile was not the case, they could then query the *Reading Room Log* and the *Reader Registration Form* databases to see who had accessed the collection last and proceed with that information.

This author is not trying to imply that gathering data via a database will be effortless. Developing an efficient system takes time and resources, and databases are no exception to this. One must be purposeful when designing database tables and appropriate queries acquire pertinent information. Still, when compared to the inefficient, time-consuming hand tallies that are the norm for the Manuscripts Department, the benefits for a database instantly become clear.

Any database software could be employed to create the user assessment construct. For sample tables provided in Appendix H through J, Microsoft Access was selected because it is already in use at the Manuscripts Department. Also, this software is widely available and is compatible with most existing computer systems. Finally, with its “wizards” to help create tables, forms, queries and reports, Access can facilitate the creation of the database by those with little database experience.

Appendices H through J present the tables for the user assessment database created in Microsoft Access, containing sample information to demonstrate the system’s interface. Appendix H shows the tables created from the *Revised Reader Registration Form*, Appendix I is the *Research Room Log*, and Appendix J is the *Onsite Patron File*. Most of the tables created from the sections on the Reader Registration Form resemble their paper counterpart, although some restructuring in the electronic environment to increase functionality.

The data generated from the two surveys can either be stored in other database tables or in a spreadsheet application. The author finds it is easier to manipulate survey data in a spreadsheet rather than a database. Also, it is easier to format data for most statistical analysis software in a spreadsheet. Using a database instead of a spreadsheet

will not make the data ineligible for analysis later. Personal preference and comfort level should be the deciding factors on what application is selected.

As it is undeniable that understanding users and user behaviors leads to improved archival services, the comprehensive user assessment system analyses data on researchers in order to support efforts to improve the quality of archival reference service. Archives have to utilize available technology to facilitate understanding of patrons and their information-seeking behaviors if they want to keep pace with the growing volume of information requests from an increasing archives user community.

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## Appendix A

### Previous Reader Registration Form

(Departmental Rules found on the verso not included)

Manuscripts Department  
 Southern Historical Collection/Southern Folklife Collection/University Archives  
 Wilson Library, CB# 3926  
 The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill  
 Chapel Hill, North Carolina, USA 27514-8890  
 Phone: (919) 962-1345 Fax: (919) 962-4452

#### Research Agreement

All researchers using the resources of the Manuscripts Department must complete this form. The information you provide will help the staff to assist you better in your research, compile statistics, and provide for the security of the Collections. Please type or print clearly.

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_ PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

INSTITUTIONAL AFFILIATION (if any) \_\_\_\_\_

ACADEMIC STATUS (if any): \_\_\_\_\_ Undergraduate \_\_\_\_\_ Graduate  
 Student  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Faculty \_\_\_\_\_ Staff

#### HOW DID YOU LEARN ABOUT OUR HOLDINGS?

_____ Citation in published work	_____ On-line catalog
_____ Word of mouth	_____ Card Catalog
_____ World Wide Web (Internet)	_____ Instructor
_____ Referral from another library department	_____ Printed Guide
_____ <i>National Union Catalog of Manuscripts Collections</i>	

#### RESEARCH PURPOSE (check all that apply):

_____ Class Project	_____ Thesis	_____ Historical Research
_____ Dissertation	_____ Genealogical Research	
_____ Literary Research	_____ Pictorial Research	
_____ Folklore/Discographical Research		
_____ UNC Administrative/Archives Research		

SUBJECT OF RESEARCH (please be specific): \_\_\_\_\_

RESEARCH DIRECTOR/CLASS INSTRUCTOR (if any): \_\_\_\_\_

#### PUBLICATION PLANS (if any):

\_\_\_\_\_ article \_\_\_\_\_ book \_\_\_\_\_ sound recording \_\_\_\_\_ video \_\_\_\_\_ Web page

**PLEASE READ & SIGN THE DEPARTMENTAL RULES PRINTED ON THE BACK OF THIS FORM**

## Appendix B

### Revised Reader Registration Form

(Departmental Rules not included)

**Manuscripts Department**  
**Southern Historical Collection/Southern Folklife Collection/University Archives**  
**Wilson Library, CB#3926**  
**The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill**  
**Chapel Hill, North Carolina, USA 27514-8890**  
**Phone: (919) 962-1345 FAX: (919) 962-4452**

#### READER REGISTRATION FORM

All researchers using the resources of the Manuscripts Department must complete this form. The information you provide will help the staff to assist you better in your research, compile statistics, and provide for the security of the Collections. Please type or print clearly.

ARCHIVES ID \_\_\_\_\_

HOW DID YOU FIRST REQUEST THIS INFORMATION?

Onsite       Email       Telephone       FAX       Mail

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

CURRENT

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_  
 (Street Address, City, State and ZIP Code)

PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_

PERMANENT

ADDRESS:: \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_

EMAIL \_\_\_\_\_

INSTITUTIONAL AFFILIATION (if any) \_\_\_\_\_

DEPARTMENT \_\_\_\_\_

(Please select the most appropriate category)

Unaffiliated       UNC-CH       UNC System       University       College  
 Community or Technical College       School       Museum       Library  
 Historical Society       State of North Carolina  
 Other \_\_\_\_\_

RESEARCHER STATUS

(Please select the most appropriate category)

**STUDENT**

Elementary  
 High School  
 Undergraduate  
 Graduate Student

**FACULTY**

Elementary  
 High School  
 Staff  
 Assistant  
 Instructor  
 Emeritus

**RESEARCHER**

Independent Researcher  
 Contract Researcher  
 Genealogist  
 Journalist  
 Other \_\_\_\_\_

Information Professional \_\_\_\_\_

Are you a UNC-CH Alumnus?  Yes  No

HOW DID YOU LEARN ABOUT OUR HOLDINGS? (check all that apply)

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Citation in published work  | <input type="checkbox"/> On-line catalog                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Word of mouth   | <input type="checkbox"/> Instructor                       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Referral from UNC library department                                      | <input type="checkbox"/> RLIN                             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Referral by Other _____   | <input type="checkbox"/> Exhibit                          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Guide to the Southern Historical Collection</i>                        | <input type="checkbox"/> Manuscripts Department Home Page |
| <input type="checkbox"/> World Cat   | <input type="checkbox"/> ArchivesUSA                      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other Web Page _____  | <input type="checkbox"/> Online Exhibit                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Internet Search Engine _____  | <input type="checkbox"/> Other                            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>National Union Catalog of Manuscripts Collections</i> (text)           |   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>National Union Catalog of Manuscripts Collections</i> (online version) |   |

Which of the previous was the most helpful? \_\_\_\_\_

Which of the previous was the least helpful? \_\_\_\_\_

List all subject terms used in preliminary search (if applicable):

\_\_\_\_\_

RESEARCH PURPOSE (check all that apply):

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> University Archives Research     | <input type="checkbox"/> University Archives Administrative Research |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historical Research              | <input type="checkbox"/> Genealogical Research                       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Creative Writing Research        | <input type="checkbox"/> Literary Research                           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pictorial Research               | <input type="checkbox"/> Creative Arts Research                      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Folklore/Discographical Research |  |

SUBJECT OF RESEARCH (please be specific): \_\_\_\_\_

RESEARCH DIRECTOR/CLASS INSTRUCTOR (if any)

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Affiliation \_\_\_\_\_ Department \_\_\_\_\_

PUBLICATIONS/RESEARCH OUTCOMES (if any):

- |  |  |                                       |  |                                  |
|--|--|---------------------------------------|--|----------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Class Project | <input type="checkbox"/> Thesis          | <input type="checkbox"/> Dissertation | <input type="checkbox"/> Journal Article | <input type="checkbox"/> Article |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Book          | <input type="checkbox"/> Sound Recording |                                       | <input type="checkbox"/> Video           | <input type="checkbox"/> Exhibit |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Web Page      |  |                                       |  |                                  |

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## Appendix C

### Addendum to Reader Registration

**Patron**
**Name** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date** \_\_\_\_\_

**Archives ID** \_\_\_\_\_

**HOW DID YOU FIRST REQUEST THIS INFORMATION?**
 Onsite       Email       Telephone       FAX       Mail

**CURRENT**
**ADDRESS:** \_\_\_\_\_  
(Street Address, City, State and ZIP Code)
**PHONE:** \_\_\_\_\_

**EMAIL** \_\_\_\_\_

**INSTITUTIONAL AFFILIATION (if any)** \_\_\_\_\_

**DEPARTMENT** \_\_\_\_\_

(Please select the most appropriate category)

<input type="checkbox"/> Unaffiliated	<input type="checkbox"/> UNC-CH	<input type="checkbox"/> UNC System	<input type="checkbox"/> University
<input type="checkbox"/> College	<input type="checkbox"/> Community or Technical College	<input type="checkbox"/> School	
<input type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Library	<input type="checkbox"/> Historical Society	<input type="checkbox"/> State of North Carolina
<input type="checkbox"/> Other			

**RESEARCHER STATUS**
(Please select the most appropriate category)

<b>STUDENT</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Elementary <input type="checkbox"/> High School <input type="checkbox"/> Undergraduate <input type="checkbox"/> Graduate Student  <input type="checkbox"/> Information Professional _____	<b>FACULTY</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Elementary <input type="checkbox"/> High School <input type="checkbox"/> Staff <input type="checkbox"/> Assistant <input type="checkbox"/> Instructor <input type="checkbox"/> Emeritus	<b>RESEARCHER</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Independent Researcher <input type="checkbox"/> Contract Researcher <input type="checkbox"/> Genealogist <input type="checkbox"/> Journalist <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____
---	---	---

**HOW DID YOU LEARN ABOUT OUR HOLDINGS? (check all that apply)**

<input type="checkbox"/> Citation in published work	<input type="checkbox"/> On-line catalog
<input type="checkbox"/> Word of mouth	<input type="checkbox"/> Instructor
<input type="checkbox"/> Referral from UNC library department	<input type="checkbox"/> RLIN
<input type="checkbox"/> Referral by Other _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Exhibit
<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Guide to the Southern Historical Collection</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Manuscripts Department Home Page
<input type="checkbox"/> World Cat	<input type="checkbox"/> ArchivesUSA
<input type="checkbox"/> Other Web Page _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Online Exhibit
<input type="checkbox"/> Internet Search Engine _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Other
<input type="checkbox"/> <i>National Union Catalog of Manuscripts Collections</i> (text)	
<input type="checkbox"/> <i>National Union Catalog of Manuscripts Collections</i> (online version)	

Which of the previous was the most helpful? \_\_\_\_\_

Which of the previous was the least helpful? \_\_\_\_\_

List all subject terms used in preliminary search (if applicable):

---



---

RESEARCH PURPOSE (check all that apply):

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> University Archives Research     | <input type="checkbox"/> University Archives Administrative Research |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historical Research              | <input type="checkbox"/> Genealogical Research                       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Creative Writing Research        | <input type="checkbox"/> Literary Research                           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pictorial Research               | <input type="checkbox"/> Creative Arts Research                      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Folklore/Discographical Research |  |

SUBJECT OF RESEARCH (please be specific): \_\_\_\_\_

RESEARCH DIRECTOR/CLASS INSTRUCTOR (if any)

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Affiliation \_\_\_\_\_ Department \_\_\_\_\_

PUBLICATIONS/RESEARCH OUTCOMES (if any):

- |  |  |                                       |  |                                  |
|--|--|---------------------------------------|--|----------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Class Project | <input type="checkbox"/> Thesis          | <input type="checkbox"/> Dissertation | <input type="checkbox"/> journal article | <input type="checkbox"/> article |
| <input type="checkbox"/> book          | <input type="checkbox"/> sound recording |                                       | <input type="checkbox"/> video           | <input type="checkbox"/> exhibit |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Web page      |  |                                       |  |                                  |

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**Appendix E**  
**Onsite Patron File**

**Name** \_\_\_\_\_

**Archives ID** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Staff:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Collection** \_\_\_\_\_

**Follow-Up:**

**Date Completed:** \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix F

### Survey

Thank you for taking a few minutes to complete this questionnaire. Your response to these questions will aid the department to create a better research experience. Please answer these questions as candidly as possible. If you cannot finish the questionnaire here, take it with you and return it to the address below. Should you have any additional comments, you share them by sending a letter or email, or by calling the department.

Manuscripts Department  
Southern Historical Collection/Southern Folklife Collection/University Archives  
Wilson Library, CB# 3926  
The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill  
Chapel Hill, North Carolina, USA 27514-8890  
Phone: (919) 962-1345 Fax: (919) 962-4452

1. Have you visited the Manuscripts Department before?
  - A. Yes
  - B. No
2. Have you used the collections housed in the department before?
  - A. Yes
  - B. No
3. How would you describe yourself from the options below?
  - A. Expert Researcher
  - B. Experienced Researcher
  - C. Novice Researcher
  - D. Inexperienced Researcher
4. How much of your project will be based on research at this collection as compared to research at other archives or libraries?
  - A. This collection is the primary source for the project.
  - B. This collection will be used equally with other resources.
  - C. Other resources will be the primary source for the project.
5. How satisfied are you with your findings?
  - A. Very satisfied
  - B. More satisfied
  - C. Satisfied
  - D. Less satisfied
  - E. Very unsatisfied
6. How much useful information did you find when compared to your research expectations?
  - A. Much More information
  - B. A little more information
  - C. About what I expected
  - D. A little less information
  - E. Much Less information
7. From the list below, please indicate the level of difficulty encountered conducting your research compared to your expectations.
  - A. No difficulty
  - B. Some difficulty



- C. Expected level of difficulty
  - D. More difficulty
  - E. Very difficult
8. From the list below, please indicate the speed at which you completed your research as compared to your expectations.
- A. Very fast
  - B. Somewhat faster
  - C. Expected speed
  - D. Somewhat slower
  - E. Very slow
9. How satisfied are you with the service you received?
- A. Very Satisfied
  - B. More Satisfied
  - C. Satisfied
  - D. Less Satisfied
  - E. Very Unsatisfied
10. Did you have an orientation interview?
- A. Yes
  - B. No
11. How useful was the overview of the collection's holdings?
- A. Very Useful
  - B. Useful
  - C. Hardly useful
  - D. Not Useful
  - E. Did not receive an overview of the collection's holdings
12. Was a reference interview offered?
- A. Yes
  - B. No
13. How useful was the reference interview?
- A. Very Useful
  - B. Useful
  - C. Hardly Useful
  - D. Not Useful
  - E. Did not receive a reference interview
14. How useful were staff recommendations for relevant collections?
- A. Very Useful
  - B. Useful
  - C. Hardly Useful
  - D. Not Useful
  - E. Did not receive staff recommendations
15. How useful were the online finding aids?
- A. Very Useful
  - B. Useful
  - C. Hardly Useful
  - D. Not Useful
  - E. Did not use the online finding aids

16. How useful were the hardcopy finding aids?
- A. Very Useful
  - B. Useful
  - C. Hardly Useful
  - D. Not Useful
  - E. Did not use the hardcopy finding aids
17. How useful were instructions regarding photocopy procedures?
- A. Very Useful
  - B. Useful
  - C. Hardly Useful
  - D. Not Useful
  - E. Was not instructed regarding photocopy procedures
18. How useful were instructions regarding research room policies?
- A. Very Useful
  - B. Useful
  - C. Hardly Useful
  - D. Not Useful
  - E. Was not instructed regarding research room policies
19. While doing your research, what from the list below was the most helpful for finding relevant collections?
- A. Proper names of persons, organizations and university departments
  - B. Dates
  - C. Subject terms
  - D. None of the above
  - E. Other
20. In what areas do you think we perform well?
21. What areas do you think should be improved?

THIS IS THE END OF THE SURVEY. THANK YOU AGAIN FOR TAKING TIME TO COMPLETE THIS SURVEY.

## Appendix G

### Remote Patron Survey

Thank you for taking a few minutes to complete this questionnaire. Your response to these questions will aid the department to create a better research experience. Please answer these questions as candidly as possible and return it to the address below. Should you have any additional comments, you share them by sending a letter or email, or by calling the department.

Manuscripts Department  
Southern Historical Collection/Southern Folklife Collection/University Archives  
Wilson Library, CB# 3926  
The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill  
Chapel Hill, North Carolina, USA 27514-8890  
Phone: (919) 962-1345 Fax: (919) 962-4452

1. How did you first contact the Manuscripts Department?
  - a. Letter
  - b. FAX
  - c. Telephone
  - d. Electronic Inquiry Form
  - e. Email
  
2. From the list below, please indicate what was most useful in discovering the collection.
  - a. The Manuscripts Department Home Page
  - b. Internet Search Engines
  - c. The University of North Carolina Library Online Catalog
  - d. None of the above
  - e. Other
  
3. How much of your project will be based on research at this collection as compared to research at other archives or libraries?
  - a. This collection is the primary source for the project.
  - b. This collection will be used equally with other resources.
  - c. Other resources will be the primary source for the project.
  
4. If this collection is not the primary resource for your project, from the list below please indicate what will be the primary resource.
  - a. Another library
  - b. Another archive
  - c. Another manuscripts collection
  - d. Another cultural institution (museum, historical society, etc.)
  - e. Monographs
  - f. None of the above
  - g. Other



5. How would you describe the response time to your inquiry?
  - a. Very Fast
  - b. Fast
  - c. About average
  - d. Slow
  - e. Very Slow
  
6. How satisfied are you with the initial response to your inquiry by the Manuscripts Department?
  - a. Very satisfied
  - b. More satisfied
  - c. Satisfied
  - d. Less satisfied
  - e. Very unsatisfied
  
7. How would you describe the initial response to your inquiry?
  - a. Very Helpful
  - b. Somewhat helpful
  - c. About average
  - d. Unhelpful
  - e. Very Unhelpful
  
8. How useful were staff recommendations for relevant collections?
  - a. Very Useful
  - b. Useful
  - c. Hardly Useful
  - d. Not Useful
  - e. Did not receive staff recommendations
  
9. How useful were instructions regarding photocopy procedures?
  - a. Very Useful
  - b. Useful
  - c. Hardly Useful
  - d. Not Useful
  - e. Was not instructed regarding photocopy procedures
  
10. How useful were the online finding aids?
  - a. Very Useful
  - b. Useful
  - c. Hardly Useful
  - d. Not Useful
  - e. Did not use the online finding aids

11. While doing your research, what from the list below was the most helpful for finding relevant collections?
- Proper names of persons, organizations and university departments
  - Dates
  - Subject terms
  - None of the above
  - Other
12. Please indicate how useful was the visitor information?
- Very Useful
  - Useful
  - Hardly Useful
  - Not Useful
  - Did not request visitor information
13. In what areas do you think we perform well?
14. What areas do you think should be improved?

**THIS IS THE END OF THE SURVEY. THANK YOU AGAIN FOR TAKING TIME TO COMPLETE THIS SURVEY.**

## Appendix H

### Database for Reader Registration

Personal Information				
Manuscripts ID	First Contact	Date	First Name	Last Name
2001	Onsite	01/01/2002	Donna	Baker

Current							
CID	Current Street	Current City	Current State	Current ZIP	Current Country	Current Phone	Email
2001	Ephesus Church Road	Chapel Hill	NC	27514-		(919) 962-1345	baked@ils.unc.edu

Permanent						
MID	Permanent Street	Permanent City	Permanent State	Permanent ZIP	Permanent Country	Permanent Phone
2001	Same					

Institutional Affiliation			
IAID	Institution Name	Institution Department	Institution Type
2001	Manuscripts Department	Public Services	UNC-CH

Researcher Status					
SID	Student	Faculty	Cultural Heritage Professional	Researcher	UNC Alumnus
2001	Graduate				No

<b>Holdings</b>				
<b>HID</b>	<b>Holdings Discovery</b>	<b>Most Beneficial</b>	<b>Least Beneficial</b>	<b>Search Term</b>
2001	Manuscripts Web page, Word of Mouth, Instructor	Manuscripts Department Home Page	Word of Mouth	Paul Green

<b>Research Purpose</b>		
<b>RID</b>	<b>Research Purpose</b>	<b>Research Subject</b>
2001	Historical Research	Civil War

<b>Research Director</b>			
<b>DID</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Affiliation</b>	<b>Department</b>
2001	Helen Tibbo	UNC-CH	SILS

<b>Publication Plans</b>					
<b>PBID</b>	<b>Publication</b>	<b>Publication 2</b>	<b>Publication 3</b>	<b>Publication 4</b>	<b>Publication 5</b>
2001	Thesis	Journal article			



**Appendix I****Database For Research Room Log**

<b>Research Room Log</b>							
<b>RRID</b>	<b>Collection Number</b>	<b>Staff</b>	<b>Folder</b>	<b>Box</b>	<b>Volume</b>	<b>Refiled by</b>	<b>Date</b>
2001	3946	DB	11			DB	01/01/2002

**Appendix J**  
**Database for Onsite Patron File**

<b>Onsite Patron File</b>					
<b>FID</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Staff</b>	<b>Comment</b>	<b>Follow Up</b>	<b>Date Completed</b>
2001	01/01/2001	DB	Item requested was not what the patron requested. The collection had been renumbered. Found the item. Corrected paper finding aid		