



Center for the History of Medicine
COUNTWAY LIBRARY OF MEDICINE

Scholarly Engagement Survey

As part of its *Foundations in Public Health Policy* program, the Center for the History of Medicine at the Countway Library is currently seeking students, researchers, and public health professionals to participate in a survey about its historical manuscript collections.

Your participation will help us determine the efficacy and utility of our research tools, allow the Center to improve access to our historical resources, and help make our collections available to researchers over shorter periods of time.

For more information, or to take part in the survey, please contact

Michael Dello Iacono, Project Archivist:
MPD13@hms.harvard.edu 617-432-6926

You will receive a book, *Treasures of the Countway*, and a tote bag from the Archives for Women in Medicine as thanks for participating.

Center for the History of Medicine
User Study, 2009-2010

Introduction

As part of its Foundations in Public Health Policy grant work, the Center for the History of Medicine, Countway Library, is conducting a study to document and analyze how researchers use and respond to different access tools developed for delivering information about its collections to the public. This grant, as funded by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation and administered by the Council on Library and Information Resources (CLIR), has enabled the Center to experiment with ways to make collections available to researchers over shorter periods of time. Your participation in this study will help us determine the efficacy and utility of these tools.

The study consists of two parts:

1. An exercise consisting of both multiple choice survey questions and detailed questions designed to assess how participants use two different versions of a spreadsheet to answer questions about a collection. *We estimate that it will take about one hour to complete the study exercise.*
2. An interview (either at the Center or via conference call) that will focus on content and usability issues related to how you used the spreadsheets to complete the exercise. *We estimate the interview to take between thirty minutes and one hour.*

We sincerely appreciate your taking the time to participate and provide feedback. We are happy to answer any questions you might have about the project. Please contact Michael Dello Iacono, Project Archivist, MPD13@hms.harvard.edu, and Emily R. Novak Gustainis, Collections Services Archivist, ERN6@hms.harvard.edu.

A. Introductory Questions

1. How would you identify yourself?

- _____ A new/inexperienced researcher who has not used many archival or manuscript collections
- _____ An experienced researcher who has visited a number of archives and used a number of archival or manuscript collections
- _____ A person in the Public Health Field new to archival research
- _____ A person in the Public Health Field who is an experienced researcher
- _____ An information professional (librarian, archivist, metadata specialist, etc.)

2. How comfortable are you conducting research online and using electronic resources?

1	2	3	4	5
Very				Very
uncomfortable				comfortable

3. How many archives have you visited in the last three years to conduct primary research?

- | | |
|----------------------|---------------------|
| a) 0 repositories | b) 1-5 repositories |
| c) 6-10 repositories | d) More than 10 |

4. Have you been unable to use a collection at a repository because it was unavailable for research use (or was “unprocessed”)? (Please circle)

Yes No

5. If so, how many times during the last three years? _____

6. Which statement best reflects how you feel about the amount of time an archives or special library takes to provide public access to a new collection you are interested in using?

- a) I would rather have a repository provide access to a collection (or part of a collection) that has been minimally reviewed for research use (for example, only has a box list) so long as the collection is made available to the public as soon as possible.
- b) I would rather wait until a collection has been well organized and thoroughly documented for optimal research use, even though it may take longer for the repository to make it available to the public.

7. Which is more important to you?

- a) Being able to spend less time at a repository because I have very detailed information about a collection and know exactly what to have pulled for me, even if it means I might not be able to access a collection in the immediate future while this type of information is being collected.
- b) Having access to a collection, even if it means I may need to spend a lot of time at a repository searching for the information I want.

8A. If you could only have ONE of the following discovery tools, which would you rather have available to you online and in ADVANCE of your visiting the Center for the History of Medicine?

- a) A detailed summary of a collection's content, biographical/institutional information about the creator(s) of the collection, and information about what kinds of documents are in the collection, including date spans for all materials.
- b) A spreadsheet containing a list of every folder "title" in every box of the collection as it was originally labeled by the person who created or assembled the collection.

8B: Why did you pick A or B?

9. Which is more important to you?

- a) Being able to simultaneously search for subjects or people across many finding aids in order to discover which collections at a particular repository may help me with my research.
- b) Being able to print an inventory for, or guide to, a collection for personal reference use from a list of collections posted on a repository's website.

B. Spreadsheet-Specific Questions

Part B-I

To complete Part B-I, please copy and paste the following location into your web browser: <http://repository.countway.harvard.edu/xmlui/handle/10473/3600>

Under "Sample Submissions," select the file:
CLIR_baumgartner_boxlist_A.xls

Under "Associated Files," click on "View/Open" for the file:
CLIR_baumgartner_boxlist_A.xls

Please take a few minutes to look at the spreadsheet and then answer the following questions. Please feel free to cut and paste answers from the spreadsheet into this Word document.

1. What are the five major groups of records found in the collection?
2. Pick two of the groups you identified in question 1. What kinds of information would you expect to be in these groups of records?
3. What types of materials would you expect to find in the collection?
4. Why?
5. In what year did Baumgartner travel to Russia?
6. Please name two of Baumgartner's published articles from the 1950s.
7. What steps did you take to answer to questions 5 and 6?
8. How much material is there in the collection related to speeches given by Baumgartner?
9. What steps did you take to answer question 8?
10. If you were looking for letters between Baumgartner and her family members, where would you expect to find them?

11. Please list three individuals Baumgartner corresponded with.
12. From 1954-1962, Leona Baumgartner served as Commissioner of Public Health for the city of New York. Where would you look for records in the collection that relate to Baumgartner's public appearances as Commissioner?
13. You are researching the activities of the American Public Health Association (APHA) in the 1950s and 1960s. Which boxes would you ask to see?
14. How would you find out if there were items from the 1970s?
15. How would you determine how much material from the 1970s is in Series 4?
16. Did you need to print the spreadsheet in order to answer the above questions?
17. Did you save the spreadsheet to your desktop or local drive before working on the questions?

Part B-II

To complete Part B-II, please copy and paste the following location into your web browser: <http://repository.countway.harvard.edu/xmlui/handle/10473/3600>

Under "Sample Submissions," select the file:
CLIR_baumgartner_boxlist_B.xls

Under "Associated Files," click on "View/Open" for the file
CLIR_baumgartner_boxlist_B.xls

Please take a few minutes to look at the spreadsheet and then answer the following questions. Please feel free to cut and paste answers from the spreadsheet into this Word document

1. Summarize the kind of information provided in the “Notes” column.

2. What types of materials would you expect to find in the collection?

3. Baumgartner delivered many speeches and lectures throughout her career. Please name two people who delivered a talk along with Dr. Baumgartner.

4. Please explain how you found the above answer.

5. Do folders with notes in the “Notes” column contain more important documents?

6. Please list the question numbers in section B-I that you would now answer differently having seen the “Notes” column.

On-Site Interview – For Internal Use

Five target audiences have been identified:

- Target 1: New/Inexperienced researchers
- Target 2: Experienced researchers
- Target 3: People in the Public Health Field who are new to Archival research
- Target 4: People in the Public Health Field who are experienced researchers
- Target 5: Information providers (Reference Archivists/Public Services)

1. Which target audience do you associate the interview subject with?
2. Does this audience match how they described themselves in question A-1 of the study exercise?

A. Content

3. Folder titles were transcribed from the originals. Without the context of a full finding aid, did the folder titles make sense?
4. Was there anything missing from the folder titles that you thought was important?
5. Would having Center staff append “qualifiers” to the end folder titles, such as “[lectures and presentations]” or “[subject resource files]” or [“writings”] change your interpretation of the content of a folder?
6. Why or why not?

7. Looking at the spreadsheet, could you provide an example of when a qualifier might have been useful?

B. Usability

8. Explain how you navigated the box and folder lists.

9. Did you manipulate the spreadsheet in any way when you answered the study exercise questions?

10. If so, which columns?

11. Did the columns sort properly?

12. Did you keyword-search/use “Control+F” to get your answers?

13. Did you filter data?

14. Is there any information that you think is “missing” from the spreadsheet?

C. Spreadsheet Comparisons

15. Did you prefer using the spreadsheet with the additional notes or the one without? Or did it not matter?

16. Why or why not?

17. Did you feel as if the information put in the scope and content notes somehow made that folder more important, or make you think that these folders contained “special” items?

D. Other

18. Do you have any comments related to the study exercise?

19. Do you have any comments related to the way the interview was conducted?

20. Do you have any questions about the project?

Exercise and Interview Excerpts

Collection: David D. Rutstein Papers 1916-1989 (inclusive), 1938-1980 (bulk). (H MS c315)
Participant: Elizabeth Nanas
Affiliation: Ph.D. student, College of Engineering, Wayne State University
Date: 07 February 2011

Exercise

A8A: If you could only have ONE of the following discovery tools, which would you rather have available to you online and in ADVANCE of your visiting the Center for the History of Medicine? a) A detailed summary of a collection's content, biographical/institutional information about the creator(s) of the collection, and information about what kinds of documents are in the collection, including date spans for all materials. b) A spreadsheet containing a list of every folder "title" in every box of the collection as it was originally labeled by the person who created or assembled the collection.

"A"

A8B: Why did you pick A or B?

"This was a really hard choice. I ideally, both would be great to have access to. The spreadsheet idea is really great in terms of sorting things and in terms of understanding how the collection was originally labeled/assembled. I went with the first choice because ultimately, it would be great to be able to review the collection summaries, bio/institutional info about the creators, and information about what documents are available. This kind of information (if I have to make a choice) seems most pragmatic in terms of preparation for a visit."

Interview

A3: Folder titles were transcribed from the originals. Without the context of a full finding aid, did the folder titles make sense?

Yes. It made sense, or so she thought.

A4: Was there anything missing from the folder titles that you thought was important?

Sometimes the folders made sense. Could "guess" something because some were very obvious. E.g. university or classroom lectures had some issues. A lecture for an event? A class? "Lectures" have a lot of different meanings.

A5: Would having Center staff append "qualifiers" to the end folder titles, such as "[lectures and presentations]" or "[subject resource files]" or ["writings]" change your interpretation of the content of a folder?

[Could] be helpful--might have problems--might overwhelm someone.

"Correspondence" is a broad term [so it is important] how used.

C17: Did you feel as if the information put in the scope and content notes somehow made that folder more important, or make you think that these folders contained "special" items?

No. Don't ascribe importance to the added info. But she stated that this might reflect her anthropological training.

General Comments from Participant

Subject said it would have been interesting to her to have some kind of reference or link to the historical context in which the records were created, historical or political

things going on. Trends of time. How does this [collection] fit into a "cultural product?"