
*A project of the Oklahoma
Historical Records Advisory Board*

The Study of Archival Repositories

- During 2003 and 2004, a 49-question survey was distributed to 648 repositories from throughout the state.
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Two critical areas were addressed:

- 1) What are the most critical issues facing repositories?
- 2) What are the conditions of records?

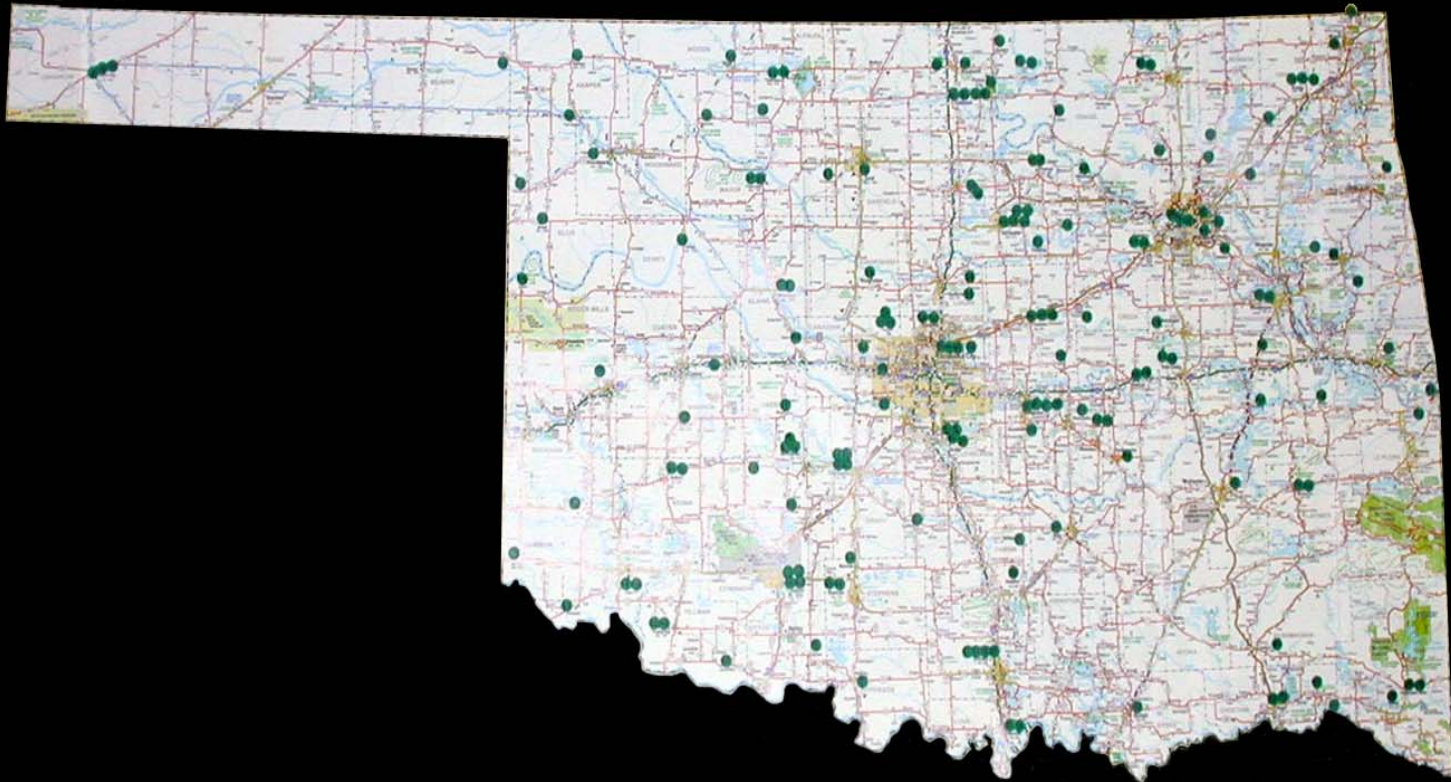
Key Objectives

- Determine which organizations maintain archival collections;
- Assess management practices;
- Evaluate threats to collections;
- Determine public access to collections;
- Assess training needs of staff and volunteers;
- Gather information for a directory of repositories;
and
- Seek input on future OHRAB activities.

236 repositories responded

- 73 Museums (30% response)
 - 65 Public Libraries (58% response)
 - 18 Historical Societies (19% response)
 - 13 Genealogical Societies (22% response)
 - 13 Academic Libraries (46% response)
 - 7 Archives (100% response)
 - 8 Special Libraries (4% response)
 - 39 “Other”
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The response was statewide



Repositories were asked about:

1. Types of holdings, including subject areas
 2. Size of holdings, both in cubic and linear feet
 3. Public access to records
 4. Budgets and funding
 5. Promotional activities
 6. Staff and volunteers
 7. Professional development needs
 8. Repository needs
 9. Services and resources
 10. Preservation activities
 11. Threats to collections
 12. Policies and plans
 13. Priorities for the Oklahoma Historical Records Advisory Board
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1. Types of holdings

- The survey asked repositories to indicate the types of records held. The majority of records include photographs, newspapers, publications, maps and drawings, and scrapbooks. The following three slides indicates the percentage of repositories holding specific records:
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- Photographic, 77%
 - Newspapers, 67%
 - Publications, 63%
 - Maps/plats/drawings, 61%
 - Scrapbooks, 60%
 - Family Histories, 59%
 - Correspondence, 51%
 - Cemetery Records, 51%
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- Meeting Records, 41%
 - Journals/Diaries, 41%
 - Business/Organizational Records, 41%
 - Manuscripts, 40%
 - Art Work, 39%
 - Oral Histories, 36%
 - Legal Documents, 35%
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- Government Records, 29%
 - Sound, 23%
 - *Other, 21%
 - State Histories, 20%
 - Archaeological, 18%
 - Anthropology, 12%
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2. Size of holdings

- The 230 surveyed institutions hold over 98,180 cubic feet.
 - This figure does not include the Oklahoma Historical Society which holds 70,800 cubic feet or the Oklahoma Department of Libraries State Archives which holds 27,344 cubic feet.
 - 75% of repositories are seeking to add to their holdings.
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2. Public Access

- 60% of repositories have access restrictions
 - 27% require appointments
 - 3% charge fees
 - 82% do not have written collection guides
 - 45% have computerized databases
 - 11% have on-line finding aids
 - 18% have finding aids for their entire collection
 - 17% have no finding aids
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4. Budgets and funding

- 31% of respondents have budgets of less than \$1,000
 - 23% have budgets between \$1,001 and \$10,000
 - 22% have budgets between \$10,001 and \$50,000
 - 23% have budgets between \$50,001 and \$1 million
 - 1 % have budgets over \$1 million
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Funding sources

- Individual donors, 63%
 - Memberships, 36%
 - State government, 35%
 - Municipal government, 27%
 - Fees for services, 23%
 - Businesses, 14%
 - Foundations, 13%
 - Federal government, 10%
 - County government, 8%
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Stability of funding for past year

- 53% remained stable
 - 35% experienced a decrease in funding
 - 12% experienced an increase
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5. Promotional activities

- 42% do not use promotional activities on a regular basis
 - 58% distribute press releases
 - 51% have a website
 - 45% circulate newsletters
 - 30% use print advertising
 - 21% have a brochure
 - 12% use broadcast advertising
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6. Staff and volunteers

- Most work is performed by volunteers or by small staffs of one or two.
 - The level of volunteerism is high at the surveyed institutions, with over 512 individuals regularly donating time.
 - The staffing level is low at the surveyed institutions, with only 131 part- or full-time employees.
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Level of archival experience of volunteers and staff

- 88% only have on-the-job experience
 - 42% have attended archival workshops
 - 23% are degreed professionals
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Information resources utilized by staff and volunteers:

- Publications and journals, 72%
 - Workshops and seminars, 71%
 - Colleagues, 55%
 - Professional organizations, 46%
 - Professional conferences, 35%
 - Internet, 12%
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Membership in professional organizations

- Oklahoma Museums Association, 60%
 - Oklahoma Library Association, 31%
 - American Library Association, 16%
 - Society of Southwest Archivist, 8%
 - Oklahoma Conservation Congress, 6%
 - Special Libraries Association, 4.7%
 - Assoc. of Professional Genealogists, 2%
 - Other, 37%
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7. Professional development needs, in order of interest:

- Preservation, conservation
 - Fundraising
 - Use of computers in archives
 - Public relations/outreach
 - Basic collections processing
 - Collection development/appraisal
 - Disaster preparedness
 - Planning and procedure development
 - Board development
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8. Institutional needs, in order of interest:

1. Internet presence
 2. Funding development
 3. Greater public awareness
 4. Automated description systems
 5. Media exposure
 6. Board/volunteer development
 7. Training
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8. Basic collections processing
 9. Access to professional information
 10. Use of computer-based technologies
 11. Preservation of collections
 12. Additional space
 13. Improved space
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9. Services and resources needed, in ranking order

- Public awareness campaign
 - Centralized preservation lab
 - Centralized microfilming/imaging lab
 - Cooperative purchasing of archival supplies
 - Shared archival staff
 - Centralized repositories for regional records
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10. Preservation activities

- Less than 65% undertook any activities
 - 44% repaired books
 - 31% repaired documents
 - 29% made preservation photocopies or microfilm
 - 21% upgraded environmental controls
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11. Collection Threats

- Oklahoma repositories are losing valuable records with each passing day.
 - 100% of survey respondents reported losing records last year.
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47% of repositories lost records through
filing errors;
43% lost records through theft;
23% lost records because of water
damage;
20% lost records because of mold;
13% lost records because of damage
caused by pests; and
1.3% lost records because of fire

12. Security and Environmental Controls

95% do not have water detection equipment

85% do not have humidity controls

80% do not have fire suppression equipment

56% do not have security alarms

47% do not have year-round temperature control

46% do not have fire detection equipment

12. Policies and Plans

Collection Policies

- 50% of organizations do not have a collections policy.
 - The average date of existing collection policies is 1991.
 - The oldest policy is from 1954.
 - The newest is from 2003.
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Disaster Preparedness Plan

- 86% do not have a written disaster plan.
 - The average age of existing plans is 1998.
 - The oldest plan was created in 1990.
 - The news plan was created in 2003.
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Strategic Plans

- 74% of repositories do not have strategic plans
 - The average date of existing strategic plans is 1997
 - The oldest plan is 1983
 - The most recent is 2003
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Top 10 Institutional Priorities:

1. Improve preservation/conservation
 2. Improve professional skills of staff/volunteers
 3. Increase public access through better finding aids and processing backlogged materials
 4. Improve facility/storage conditions
 5. Increase public awareness
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6. Develop plans, policies, and procedures
 7. Increase financial support
 8. Expand volunteer base
 9. Increase use of technology
 10. Expand the size and scope of collections
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13. OHRAB Services Needed

1. Provide grants, 80%
 2. Workshops, technical assistance, 64%
 3. Website for records management issues, 50%
 4. Directory of repositories, 49%
 5. Lobbying for the needs of repositories, 41%
 6. Publish a newsletter for repositories, 36%
 7. Operate a listserver for the archives community, 33%
 8. Establish scanning and metadata standards, 30%
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Archives Week posters

Images of
Oklahoma

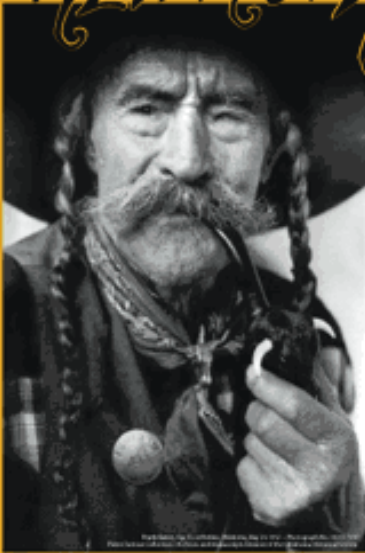


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Explore Oklahoma's Historical Resources

For more information, please call 405-524-7559
or visit www.odl.state.ok.us/archives-week November 9-16

Sponsored by the Oklahoma Historical Records Advisory Board, Oklahoma Department of Libraries, Oklahoma Historical Society, and Oklahoma Museums Association with funding provided by the National Historical Publications and Records Commission

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In summary:

1. Repositories are experiencing a steady growth in the size of collections.
 2. Repositories are under staffed.
 3. Staff and volunteers need professional training.
 4. Most repositories do not have updated plans and policies.
 5. Lack of funding is a major problem.
 6. Communication between repositories is lacking.
 7. Public awareness needs to be increased.
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The future requires:

1. A public that values Oklahoma's historical records and repositories.
 2. Collaboration between organizations
 3. Training and other resources for staff and volunteers
 4. Appropriate records storage facilities
 5. Improved public access
 6. Adequate funding
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“Records tell us who we are and what we have achieved. They document our adventures, and establish what we stand for.”

--David McCullough, author and historian

*Securing a Future for
Oklahoma's Documentary Heritage*

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