

one, of archive depositories." One large library¹ lays down the principle that "the manuscript division has been established for purposes of reference and research;" and another² puts it this way: "Manuscripts and manuscript collections should be considered first as to preservation, second as to use. Preservation necessarily precedes use and largely determines and governs it, though it must be borne in mind that a manuscript withheld from consultation might almost as well be nonexistent." In theory at least there is no very serious difference of opinion as to the primary object of archives. In practice, one finds every conceivable variation from the practically total exclusion of the student to an almost reckless freedom of access and circulation. Nevertheless, the extremes of policy are comparatively rare, and there is an increasing tendency to find a mean that will meet all the legitimate needs of research workers without sacrificing the essential safeguarding of the documents.

The following replies from a number of representative institutions in the United States and Canada bear out the above statement:

Connecticut State Library:

We should encourage the use of manuscript material by all competent to use it to advantage for the public good.

Massachusetts State Library:

I think in this age of general knowledge and research the greatest freedom should be given in the use of historical materials in the possession of an historical society or archives bureau.

Pennsylvania State Library:

My invariable rule has been to furnish all the information possible to each student making a request for original material.

Iowa State Library:

A historical society or archives bureau, when supported by the State, should allow fullest liberty to all who have a serious purpose either to copy or to photograph the material in its possession. I can see no justice in depriving any citizen of the State of opportunity to use material collected by the State at the taxpayers' expense.

California State Library:

Our plan in regard to historical material is to permit the freest consultation commensurate with the safety and preservation of the material.

State Historical Society of Wisconsin:

Our past and present policy favors the broadest and freest possible use of our historical materials.

Michigan Historical Commission:

My experience leads to the firm belief that all archives should be made accessible to every student or society either to copy or to photograph.

South Dakota Department of History:

I have conceived that our mission is to give the widest extension to the knowledge and use of the materials of history, and that in consequence everything we have and every service in our power have been at all times placed at the use of the public.

¹ New York Public Library, Rules of the Manuscript Division.

² J. C. Fitzpatrick, Notes on the Care, Cataloguing, Calendaring, and Arranging of Manuscripts (Library of Congress), 1913, p. 5.