

Chicago Public Library:

We believe in the widest liberty and latitude to students consistent with the safeguarding of the materials consulted.

Newberry Library, Chicago:

I believe that, in general, historical societies and archives bureaus should be most generous in granting permission to other institutions or to individuals to make copies of the material in their possession.

Having gained some light on the general practice as to the use of historical materials in public institutions, let us go a little more into detail. With a few exceptions, the consensus of opinion is that research workers should have the freest access to and use of historical materials consistent with their preservation. The character of these materials, however, makes imperative some restrictions in their use. Principles of access and circulation that are justifiable and praiseworthy in the case of books may be more than questionable in the use of manuscripts. A book destroyed or damaged may, as a general rule, be replaced. The loss of a manuscript, if no copy exists, is irreparable.

Let me state, then, some of the questions that suggest themselves in connection with the general subject of restriction:

To what extent should an institution possessing valuable historical material allow other institutions or individuals to make copies?

Should such material be loaned for use in another institution, either in the same city or farther afield?

Is it justifiable to refuse access to documents in course of publication, or whose publication has been decided upon, or which may be published by the institution possessing the documents, or by some individual acting under its authority?

Should the use of public documents be refused, on or before a certain date, or of private documents of a confidential nature?

What restrictions should be placed upon the liberty of students desiring to consult manuscript or other material?

Should they be subjected to oversight in making copies or tracings of material?

Should they be required to submit their notes to an attendant?

Should their work be subjected to censorship or should they be left to their own judgment as to the character and extent of their extracts?

What credentials should a research worker be required to submit?

Should there be an age limit?

Is the custodian entitled to know the purpose for which copies are made; is he justified in refusing permission if the proposed use seems trivial or undesirable; and, on the other hand, is he entitled to grant exclusive use of certain material?

Should there be any limitation of the number of manuscripts or volumes used by a student at one time?