Low Pay in Archives

A Review of Recent Events

and Where Do We Go From Here?

#saa19 #s210
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mark Lambert</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Immediate Past-President, Society of Southwest Archivists</td>
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<tr>
<td>Deputy Director of Archives and Records, Texas General Land Office, Austin, TX</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[<a href="mailto:mlambert727@gmail.com">mlambert727@gmail.com</a>]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Good afternoon, it is Sunday, August 4th, at 1:30 pm, and you are in Session 210.

Low Pay in Archives: A Review of Recent Events, and Where Do We Go From Here?

- Mark Lambert, Texas General Land Office
- Sara DeCaro, Baker University
- Talya Cooper, Archival Consultant
- Samantha Dodd, Southern Methodist University
- Rosemary K. J. Davis, Yale University
- Rose Oliveira, Connecticut College
Picard management tip:
Be on the same side as the crew, not against them.

▸ I will introduce each of our other speakers before each one speaks. Please leave all questions until the end, as we might be pressed for time.

▸ I will speak a little here on how we got here, recent events, and where do we go from here?

▸ Our other speakers will address unionization, contract positions, student debt, unpaid internships, the jump from teaching to archives, and generally the effects of low pay in the profession.

▸ And remember, relatively speaking, we are the archival elite here---many professional archivists who are SAA members can’t afford to come to SAA annual meetings at all for lack of money or can’t come every year.

▸ I am hopefully also speaking for those archivists as well.
The Recent American Economy and its Relation to Archival Salaries

The economy over the last 40 years has grown by leaps and bounds, but not pay.
The richest 10% of households now represent 70% of all U.S. wealth, and the share of the top 1% wealthiest increased from 23% in 1989 to 32% in 2018. Meanwhile, the American middle class is shrinking.

Source: Piketty and Saez, 2003 updated to 2012. Series based on pre-tax cash market income including or excluding realized capital gains, and always excluding government transfers.
“We have begun to cannibalize the very people that make this economy thrive” - Abigail Disney.

- Since approximately 1973, the American economy has been restructured to more greatly benefit multi-millionaires and billionaires.

- The Great Recession of 2008 did even more damage to salaries and wages.

- This isn’t talk of socialism, this is talk of the creation of an oligarchy:
  - In the 1950s, families could be middle class, and own a home on one income;
  - In the 1950s, a typical CEO made 20 times more than their average workers;
  - Today a CEO makes 361 times more than their average workers;
  - Adjusted for inflation, 2019 workers make 25% less than in 1968.
This situation is affecting newer archival professionals the most.

- Rising medical insurance rates, including the move to high deductibles, for positions that include them, as well as high prescription drug rates.

- Rising housing costs making home ownership less likely, and thus less likely to gain the equity in a home that is the largest piece of middle-class wealth traditionally.

- This is also the longest period in American history without a federal minimum wage increase.

- Teacher activism nationally during the last five years, which garnered lots of support publicly, caused me to notice that their published salaries were very comparable to ours, and sometimes even higher!
  - And they get summers off (but often resort to taking summer jobs)
  - Our speaker Samantha Dodd will speak more about teacher pay later.
  - So last year I decided as SSA President, I would focus on this topic.
Others in the Library, Archives and Museums professions have been writing about our low salaries since at least 2009-10. (In The Library with The Lead Pipe)

There Are Many Reasons for our Low Pay, but I think the Most Relevant Ones for this talk Include:

- Lack of senior archivist leadership;
- Lack of archival organization leadership;
- The archival martyr complex---the work comes first, staff needs come second!
- Personalities attracted to archives work: servant-leaders, obedient, people-pleasers?
- Personal decisions made by archivists; you must be willing to move at times for higher pay or to advance;
- The fact that most archival work is governmental or non-profit based, which have traditionally had lower salaries than the private sector (but came w/ pensions - but not the case anymore);
- The traditionally gendered roles in the profession (The “Pink Collar” which Sara DeCaro will speak more about.)
We as a profession have forgotten to put our people first, and betrayed our values of accountability, advocacy, diversity, professionalism, service, and social responsibility.

When we pay someone poorly, merely because we can, that goes against our ethics and values as archivists. When you advocate for a new position, please advocate for a permanent position with a good salary. We have to start somewhere!

I think our pay is WAY too low, in fact, artificially low, considering our high value to institutions and society. (including RM tasks).

We can compare very favorably to accountants, attorneys, managers and IT professionals in the value we bring to American society, government, non-profits and the private sector.

We maintain and manage valuable assets like accountants, we provide context and background for management decisions, we keep businesses within the law and defend citizens, govts., and employer's rights. We also defend the rule of law, free speech and the public's right to know, and business and govt. transparency like attorneys, and we manage important information sources (on paper) and electronically, like IT professionals.

In future HR market studies, argue for archivists to be compared to these groups.
Our Top Directors and Leaders need to take the lead on this issue concerning staff pay!

- I have no issue with the Top Archives Leaders making good money;
- I just think they should pull up the rest of their staff salaries as well;
- Create full-time, permanent positions;
- Minimize contract positions;
- Stop unpaid internships and be selective about the duties assigned to volunteers.
- We also tolerate high turnover in a profession that requires a lot of institutional knowledge.
What are Realistic Salary Goals for the Profession? (within 5 years)

- **One Useful Resource**: MIT LIVING WAGE CALCULATOR: [http://livingwage.mit.edu/](http://livingwage.mit.edu/)
- Notice it’s called a “living wage,” not a “thriving wage.”

Includes typical expenses and the annual salaries for various professions for your area.

For the Austin-Round Rock TX Area, the most relevant salaries to archivists I have listed below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Profession</th>
<th>Salary</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Management</td>
<td>$110,175</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computer &amp; Mathematical</td>
<td>$88,758</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legal</td>
<td>$79,242</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business &amp; Financial Operations</td>
<td>$68,070</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Healthcare Practitioners &amp; Technical</td>
<td>$64,564</td>
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<tr>
<td>Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports, &amp; Media</td>
<td>$54,728</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education, Training, &amp; Library</td>
<td>$47,774</td>
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<tr>
<td>Community &amp; Social Service</td>
<td>$46,364</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chart may not be 100% accurate: with $40,400 in Cleveland to $254,800 in San Jose, but it provides some useful starting numbers.

▸ Another Useful Resource: Salary needed to own a home in 50 metro areas

▸ Seems like a useful benchmark for a profession that should be considered middle-class based on its required educational level of a master’s degree (owning a home has traditionally created most middle-class wealth by rising property values, though that could be changing [plus savings, pensions and 401Ks]).
How do salaries in the archival profession defy the laws of statistics?

Based on the above sources, we should have at least a $50,000 starting salary for new archivists now.

If nothing else, if there is no additional money available right now, we could do with less archivists, but pay each more.

I realize supply and demand is an issue out of our control.
What are Realistic Salary Goals for the Profession? (within 5 years)

- I would argue that a medium-range goal for most Archives should be a starting salary of $60,000 for new archivists (within 5 years), a pay scale e.g.:
  - Archivist I: $60,000
  - Archivist II: $80,000
  - Archivist III: $100,000
  - Archivist IV: $120,000
  - Manager or Director: $150,000-$200,000 (or Assistant Director for the major research centers)
  - Major Research Center Director: $200,000-$250,000?

- SAA can help in this effort immediately, and much more broadly in supporting archivists and their labor issues. What does that look like beyond having salary ranges and salary minimums?

- Certainly, putting archival labor at the forefront of the organization, and not treat it as a side issue in Archivy.

- Perhaps actually commission a study of possible improvements to the SAA Career Center, up to and including unionization for SAA, and benchmark other profession associations and how they support their members.

- Review of the professional associations of accounting, law, information technology as well as records managers and UK archivists.
The Need for Unionization or SAA/ACA Merger?

▸ Other organizations can focus on promoting Archives and the History profession.

▸ If SAA is unwilling or unable to help members in this manner, we can find someone else. We could first ask the Academy of Certified Archivists (ACA).

▹ ACA has less relevance these days than formerly;
▹ ACA was great for historians, records managers or others moving into archival work to show some bona fide qualifications in 1980s and 1990s;
▹ But now that most new archivists have a graduate degree in archival science from a school of information or a history program, it is less important;
▹ We could make ACA membership more valuable to younger archivists in the profession by converting it into a national archival union organization.

▸ Or SAA could merge with ACA, and move from a membership organization model to a professional organization model.

▸ If neither is willing to help, we should start unionizing archivists, leaving SAA and ACA all together, and instead use that dues money for union dues.

▸ One of our speakers Talya Cooper will discuss her work in unionization.
Additional Steps Needed Now

- SAA also needs to immediately raise dues on its highest earners making over $90,000/year.
- The money generated can be used to better support archivists job needs, and study ways to improve the value of archival labor;
- The money can also hopefully help to further diversify the SAA leadership - right now it is top-heavy with folks from elite archives: Academics, Presidential Libraries, and Research Libraries.
- We need to fund more diverse archivists to attend annual meetings, to be on committees and in section management, to be part of Council, and to fund more diversity scholarships.
- If you are a high earner and don’t like the idea of your dues being raised to assist younger and more diverse archivists, SHAME, SHAME, SHAME, SHAME.
Additional Steps Needed Now

- SAA also needs to go further and recommend salary minimums by region:
- The Texas Library Association (TLA) can do it with 6,000 members
- How would it work?
  - RAAC members could make yearly recommendations to SAA Council
- Recommended salaries wouldn’t harm SAA, but it would give members some leverage in salary talks with managers and potential employers;
- How do we keep this salary momentum going after this meeting?
- Extend the SAA Ad-Hoc Salary Transparency Group?
- Continue this work with the Issues and Advocacy section? Another section?
- We need to keep up the pressure on this topic until there is sustained action.
For many of us, our salaries are public information – we could write about the big pay gaps at specific institutions.

▸ Please send me links or public reports of your publicly available salaries to post on the SSA website, and I will continue studying, reporting and writing about it.

▸ We could even try to get local journalists interested in these issues.
We can’t wait for another A*Census study to be performed and studied before doing something

▸ We need to start acting soon, before the economy slows down.

▸ Nonprofits will soon also start to feel the adverse effects of the recent tax law changes regarding charitable donations.

▸ Thank you.
▸ We need to move on to our next speaker now. Please save questions for the end.

▸ If you don’t get a chance to say something or ask a question today, catch me later, write it on a business card, or email me, and I will send it to our entire panel for a response.

▸ Mark Lambert
▸ Deputy Director for Archives and Records
▸ Texas General Land Office
▸ Mlambert727@gmail.com
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Talya Cooper</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Consultant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whirl-i-Gig</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>@talya_cooper</td>
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resources

DLF Working Group on Labor in Digital Archives – Contingency and Precarity Draft Guidelines

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1C0VSpyM4z5co9BrrhgQX0Jtvhc79Wtmlq_va4kQYiR0/edit#heading=h.aecms4m2t78f

DLF Research Agenda: Valuing Labor in Digital Archives

Do what you love, love what you do.
“These are liberal, progressive people,” said Howard Z. Robbins, a partner at the prominent law firm Proskauer Rose, who represents the Museum of Modern Art, the Tenement Museum, the New Museum and others. “It’s bizarre they are being demonized as if they’re Henry Clay Frick.”

why we unionized

• Solidarity among your colleagues
• Solidarity among news organizations
• Negotiating pay / equity / benefits
• Termination, Severance and Disciplinary actions
• Addressing workplace and editorial issues
• Better transparency
some wins in the contract

• Guarantees for interviewing candidates from underrepresented backgrounds in journalism
• Diversity committee
• Same amount of parental leave for all parents
• Salary floors for all unit job titles
• Written response to your request for a raise/promotion
• Benefits reaching outside the unit to the broader company
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rosemary K. J. Davis</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Accessioning Archivist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library @ Yale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>@widelight</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
$158,264.18
Thank You!

Find me at:

@widelight

&

rosemary.davis@yale.edu
Sara DeCaro

University Archivist

Baker University
Gender and Low Wages in Archives

Sara DeCaro
SAA 2019
## Issues and Advocacy Section

### Temporary Labor Survey Data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Additional income during temp employment</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Second job</td>
<td>178</td>
<td>24.5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Partner/spouse</td>
<td>154</td>
<td>21.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other income source</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>8.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No other income source</td>
<td>243</td>
<td>33.4%</td>
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How Do Gender and Marital Status Affect Wages?

Michelle J. Budig, “The Fatherhood Bonus and the Motherhood Penalty,”
The Spousal Subsidy and the Motherhood Penalty

Gender and the Archives Profession


Holland, Michael. “7 Factors that Drive Museum Wages Down,” Diversity, Equity, Accessibility, and Inclusion:  
https://www.aam-us.org/2018/02/21/7-factors-that-drive-museum-wages-down/


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Samantha Dodd</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Curator Archives of Women of the Southwest</td>
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<tr>
<td>DeGolyer Library, Southern Methodist University</td>
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</table>
My Career Path

Teacher 2009-2011
- Bachelor’s of History
- Teacher Certifications

$45,422

Archivist 2011-2016
- BA/MA in history
- Certified Archivist
- Graduate Certificate in Archival Administration
- MLIS

$30,000
Teachers in Texas

There are 5 requirements to become a teacher in Texas:

1. Obtain a bachelor’s degree
2. Complete an educator preparation program
3. Pass certification exams
4. Submit state application
5. Complete fingerprinting, background check
### Teaching Salary Schedules published online

Dallas Fort/Worth Teacher salaries 2009

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
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<th>Year</th>
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<td>3 Birdville</td>
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<td>3 Birdville</td>
<td>49500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Mansfield</td>
<td>48300</td>
<td>4 Highland Prk.</td>
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<tr>
<td>5 Denton</td>
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<td>5 Denton</td>
<td>48350</td>
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<tr>
<td>6 Fort Worth</td>
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<td>6 Mansfield</td>
<td>47800</td>
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<td>7 Coppell</td>
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<td>10 Grapevine</td>
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## Teaching Salary Schedules
published online

Dallas Fort/Worth Teacher salaries 2019

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<th>Salary</th>
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<td>1</td>
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<td>Mansfield</td>
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<td>Lewisville</td>
<td>$53,750</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>CFB</td>
<td>$53,635</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Arlington</td>
<td>$53,600*</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Keller</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Carroll</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>Coppell</td>
<td>$53,100</td>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Irving</td>
<td>$52,700</td>
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<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Plano</td>
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<td>12</td>
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<td>14</td>
<td>Duncanville</td>
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<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Richardson</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Lewisville</td>
<td>$50,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Teaching Stipends

- Additional activities
  (i.e. coaching, sponsoring organizations…)
- Additional responsibilities/service
  (i.e. department head)
- Skills such as additional languages
- Additional education (Masters, Doctorate)
Teachers Unions
Mobilization

Educator Kelley Fisher leads Arizona teachers through downtown Phoenix on their way to the state capitol during a rally for the #REDforED movement on April 26, 2018. (Ralph Freso / Getty Images)

Los Angeles Times

L.A. charter schools’ plans: Take back mayor’s office, sue district, battle teachers union

Mobilizing supporters march on the charter school association offices in downtown Los Angeles on Jan. 18. (Jae C. Hong/AP /Getty Images)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Institution</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rose Oliveira</td>
<td>Linda Lear Special Collections Librarian</td>
<td>Connecticut College</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Unpaid Internships and Salary Transparency
Resources

- 17 State wide bans and 18 local bans on previous salary history
- Federal order and states that prevent salary secrecy
- National Labor Act of 1935
- New England Archivists Contingent Employment Study