The information work of community archives: a systematic literature review

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Abstract

Purpose – This paper scrutinizes the scholarship on community archives' information work. Community archives and archiving projects represent unprecedentedly democratic venues for information work centering on essential documentary concepts such as custody, collection development and appraisal, processing, arrangement and description, organization, representation and naming, collaboration, resource generation and allocation, activism and social justice, preservation, reuse, and sustainability.

Design/methodology/approach – Unearthed through databases searches, citation chaining, and browsing, sources examined include peer-reviewed journal articles, books, and book chapters published in the English language between 1985 and 2018.

Findings – The literature on community archives' information work shows considerable geographical (six continents), topical, and (inter)disciplinary variety. This paper first explores scholars' efforts to define both community and community archives. Second, it unpacks the ways in which community archives include new stakeholders and new record types and formats even as they leverage alternative archival principles and practices. Third, it discusses community archives as political venues for empowerment, activism, and social justice work. Fourth, this paper delves into the benefits and challenges of partnerships and collaborations with mainstream institutions. Fifth, it documents the obstacles community archives face: not only tensions within and among communities, but also sustainability concerns. Finally, it sets forth six directions for future research.

Originality/value – This paper is the first systematic review of the community archives literature.

Keywords Communities, Archives, Records management, Information science and documentation, Knowledge organizations, History, Documentation, Information organizations

Paper type Literature review

> The archive is first the law of what can be said, the system that governs the appearance of statements as unique events. But the archive is also that which determines that all these things said do not accumulate endlessly in an amorphous mass, nor are they inscribed in an unbroken linearity, nor do they disappear at the mercy of chance external accidents; but they are grouped together in distinct figures, composed together in accordance with multiple relations, maintained or blurred in accordance with specific regularities. Foucault (1982), p. 129.

> Effective democratization can always be measured by this essential criterion: the participation in and the access to the archive, its constitution, and its interpretation. Derrida (1996), p. 4.

Introduction

Information work constitutes the infrastructure for getting things done (Corbin and Strauss, 1985; Hogan and Palmer, 2006; Huvila, 2008, 2009; Star and Strauss, 1999). Community archives represent unprecedentedly democratic, if always contested, venues for everyday interactive information work. Both social and individual, this dynamic, purposeful, reflective, ongoing, but often invisible work underpins archival actions and activities such as custody, collection development and appraisal, processing, arrangement and description, organization, representation and naming, collaboration, resource generation and allocation, activism and social justice, preservation, reuse, and sustainability.

Community archives puncture common misconceptions of archives as objective and neutral; further, they enable the challenging of archives as long-standing bastions of governmental and bureaucratic power, authority, and control (Derrida, 1996; Foucault, 1980; Gilliland, 2014). As grassroots tools of individual and collective identity, education, and empowerment, community archives' information work confronts and combats legal and extra-legal discrimination, repression, subordination, marginalization, and injustice flowing from imbricated white supremacy and racism, ableism, neoliberalism, heteronormativity, homophobia, patriarchy, misogyny, internal and external colonialism, segregation, forced assimilation, human rights injustices, and genocide.

The term "community archives" debuted in the US literature as early as 1942 (in *Library Journal*), but community archives as institutions picked up broader public and academic traction only in the 1960s and 1970s, propelled by the rise of social movements (e.g. civil rights, feminism, lesbians and gays, workers) and social history, oral history, public history, and folklore studies (Flinn, 2007; Mander, 2009; Sheffield, 2017). Not only did early community archives underline their organizational independence from mainstream heritage institutions, but they also embraced nontraditional record formats such as oral history; their content, moreover, augured a corrective to mainstream institutions' collections (Gilliland and Flinn, 2013). Perhaps most important, community archives' materials provided evidence of oppression and facilitated social justice claims and campaigns (Flinn and Alexander, 2015).

Community archives' growth and increasing visibility in the late twentieth century aligned with surging interest in personal and family history, increased awareness of and frustration with absences in and biases of the historical record, oppressed groups' fear of losing their identity or of (further) marginalization as well as their claims for recognition and reparations, demographic, economic, and social changes resulting from deindustrialization and migration, increased public funding for local projects, and eventually the advent of the Web and its democratic promise (Flinn, 2010, 2007). Some scholars lobbied for community involvement in archival practices, for more diverse documentary formats, and for greater exploration of the relationships among archives, identity, and memory (Paschild, 2012).

In the 2010s, the rise of community archives seemed salutary to some in the profession but inauspicious to others (Gilliland and Flinn, 2013). Subsequent scholars saw community archiving as nascent yet flourishing, a means by which potentially to profit from new methodological approaches and to enlist broader and more diverse audiences (Caswell *et al.*, 2016; Cifor *et al.*, 2018; Moore, 2016; Sheffield, 2017). According to Collins Shortall (2016), "The archival profession, having for many years viewed community archives with suspicion, is now being encouraged to embrace its community activists and to acknowledge their specialist role in preserving their own documentary heritage" (p. 145). Scholarly hype and countervailing skepticism seem likely to persist, but in any case, community archives can scarcely be ignored.

Both synthesis and analysis, this systematic review underlines the richness and complexity of community archives scholarship (Petticrew and Roberts, 2006). Sources examined include published English-language, peer-reviewed journal articles, books, and book chapters. "Commun*" AND "archiv*" was used to search title and subject fields in five databases; this effort unearthed sources published between 1985 and 2018[1]. In line with Bates's (1989) berrypicking model, citation chaining and browsing strategies were also employed.

This paper first explores scholars' efforts to define both community and community archives and to tackle the challenges of representing communities on their own terms. Second, it unpacks the ways in which community archives include new stakeholders and new record types and formats even as they leverage alternative archival principles and practices. Key principles and practices reconfigured by community archives work include custody, collection development and appraisal, processing, and arrangement and description. Third, this paper discusses community archives as political venues for empowerment, activism, and social justice. Documentary gaps, social history, collective memory, affect and healing, place

and space, and digital community archives are foregrounded. Fourth, this paper delves into the benefits and challenges of partnerships and collaborations with mainstream institutions, namely the tradeoffs between autonomy and sustainability and the importance of developing trust. Fifth, it documents the obstacles community archives face: not only tensions within and among communities, their members, and their allies, but also sustainability concerns related to individual initiative, resources, outreach, and succession. Finally, six directions for future research are suggested.

Matters of definition and representation

The term "community" resists scrupulous definition, not least because all communities are at least to some degree imagined (Anderson, 1991). Flinn *et al.* (2009) posit that any group that convenes and presents itself as a community constitutes a community. Criteria include physical locality, ethnic, national, or racial identity, culture, gender, sexual preference, socioeconomic status, faith, background, another common identity or interest, or a combination of one or more of the aforementioned.

At least two definitional problems emerge, however. On one hand, Gilliland and Flinn (2013) explain, "unease over the term 'community' is common and relates to a lack of clear definition, its ubiquitous use in government policy-speak and its associated potential for being used in an ill-defined fashion by media and state bodies as a device for denoting the 'otherness' and 'separateness' of the specific group in society being described as a community (as in the black community, the Asian community or the gay community) whose interests and concerns can be therefore ignored as not being reflective of the majority of society" (p. 3). On the other hand, scholars often romanticize "community" as a cure-all for politics and archives alike (Bak and Chen, 2014). "Community can be the warmly persuasive word to describe an existing set of relationships, or the warmly persuasive word to describe an alternative set of relationships," notes Williams (1985) acerbically (p. 76).

The definition of community archives remains similarly unsettled. It is an understatement to say, as does Flinn (2015), that the term is "not unproblematic" (p. 146). Many scholars define community archives elastically if not promiscuously, for example, as grassroots, community-owned and -controlled initiatives that collect, describe, and make accessible materials of the community's own choosing on its own terms (Flinn, 2007; Flinn *et al.*, 2009; Sheffield, 2017). What is more, these archives' attributes vary greatly across geographic and cultural contexts.

Muddying the waters further, some communities adopt the term "community archives," whereas others see it applied to them by scholars, politicians, or policymakers. Writing about Canada's policy of Chinese immigration restriction, Bak and Chen (2014) observe, "Historical injustices can knit together diverse populations into a broadly formulated community, even when those injustices were not experienced by all members of a community or their ancestors" (p. 207).

Adding still another layer of complexity, community archives show varying degrees of independence and affiliation. Depending upon their geopolitical context, they may overlap with or comprise part of public libraries, local history museums, historical societies, and art galleries, participatory or do-it-yourself (DIY) archives, postcolonial archives, memory groups, oral history initiatives, virtual communities, independent or autonomous archives, ethnic archives, activist archives, ethnocultural collections, religious and spiritual orders' archives, First Nations organizations, leisure clubs, and mainstream academic institutions (Flinn, 2011; Hurley, 2016; Poole, 2019; Sheffield, 2017; Stevens *et al.*, 2010). They evince varying organizational forms, too, based inter alia on age, physical or virtual presence, degree of autonomy or independence, nonprofit status, and sustainability (namely resources and funding) (Caswell *et al.*, 2017a; Flinn, 2010). Although Flinn (2007) rejects definitional circumscription, Paschild (2012), apropos of the Japanese American National Museum, argues that ambiguous terminology may undermine effective policy development.

Thorniness of defining community, much less community archives, aside, stakeholders wrestle with representation both of themselves (e.g. as groups or organizations) and of their materials. For example, LGBTQ individuals do not agree on terminology, as preferred terms vary not only regionally but also over time (Caldera, 2013). In 1990, Fullwood (2009) began collecting ephemera dating from the mid-twentieth century onward and established the Black Gay and Lesbian Archive (BGLA) in 2000. He concedes that the name fails fully to represent the depth and breadth of the collection, however, and hopes to develop "an appropriate name for this project that will acknowledge but not change due to the evolving sensibilities of current and future non-heterosexual self-defining women and men of African descent" (p. 247). On this point, Burford (2018) chimes in, "As the acronym of the community grows, so does the difficulty of speaking about the community as a monolith" (p. 142).

"The more diverse and accepted language available to individuals when they are constructing their identities," asserts Baucom (2018), "the more likely they will accept their gender and sexual identities in a positive manner" (p. 66). Hence, even as they discuss the ONE National Gay and Lesbian Archives, the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender Historical Society, and the Lavender Library, Archives, and Cultural Exchange of Sacramento, Inc. (LLACE), Wakimoto et al. (2013a) argue for the term "queer" as most appropriate. Add Sheffield and Barriault (2009), "Re-appropriating a pejorative word to recast it in a positive light is a politically empowering act" (p. 120).

Second, the Arab American National Museum, which opened in 2005 and focuses on 22 countries, is the first US organization committed to preserving Arab American culture and history. Given the complexity of Arab American identity—"Arab" may indicate religion, nationality, or ethnic identity—the museum includes those who self-identify as Arab Americans (McBride and Skene, 2014).

Third, Caswell (2014a) also opts for a catchall, in her case "South Asian American," as opposed to an appellation signifying an identity rooted in nation (or region), ethnicity, language, or religion. "SAADA's [South Asian American Digital Archive's] board strategically employs an essentialist identity category—South Asian American—while simultaneously undoing the logic that asserts the naturalness of that very category," she claims (p. 43). Preferred terms, like the composition of various communities themselves, change over time, for example, between first generation immigrants and their children.

Overall, the vast majority of scholars opt for quite inclusive language in defining community archives. They admit nonetheless that communities' membership and in all likelihood, their preferred nomenclature, will change over time. Information work is never completed.

New stakeholders, nontraditional records

Community archives break with traditional archives in the diversity of stakeholders involved and the types of materials considered preservation worthy. First, community archives respect and embrace different types of work expertise: they may encourage new or novel collaborations and partnerships. More broadly, they blur or even elide distinctions among archivists, curators, collectors, creators, contributors, subjects, volunteers, activists, community members, and researchers (Allard and Ferris, 2015; Gilliland and Flinn, 2013; Henningham et al., 2017; Sellie et al., 2015). Hence they may encourage new or novel collaborations or partnerships.

At the South Asian American Digital Archive (SAADA), for instance, volunteers both digitize and describe materials and publicize collections and events (Caswell, 2014a). Socializing amateurs into archival information work constitutes a challenge, however, and partnerships may founder if professionals cling to unrealistic expectations or if they elevate

formal or technical over volunteer or community knowledge or expertise, as Stevens *et al.* (2010) note. "Enthusiasm," they insist, "often has to count for as much as experience" (p. 71)

Second, community archives demonstrate remarkable catholicity in the types of records they value (Table I). Supplementing traditional written records, community archives include created materials, namely records created by or about community members, as well as received materials. This breadth stems from community archives' penchant for proactive intervention rather than traditional, passive accessioning and accumulation, as well as from their more ecumenical perspective on what records possess informational, evidential, and other types of value (Flinn, 2015)[3]. Notably, community archives collect ephemera that many mainstream repositories neglect or reject as lacking archival value (Table II)[4].

Despite this expansive reach, however, no community archive can claim comprehensive representation in its holdings, as Rieger (2014) underlines.

Reconfiguring archival principles and practices

In line with their broad collecting policies and accessioning of nontraditional materials, community archives' information work challenges, even transforms, traditional mainstream archival principles and practices such as custody, collection development and appraisal, processing, and arrangement and description.

Custody

Custody confers power not only over what information is preserved, but how—or indeed whether—it is arranged, described, and made accessible for use and reuse (Flinn *et al.*, 2009).

Record type	Examples
Oral history/tradition	Bastian (2003, 2013a, b), Caswell and Mallick (2014), Cocciolo (2017), Cosson (2017), Erde (2014), Finnell (2013), Flinn (2011), Flinn *et al.* (2009), Galloway (2009), Garaba (2016), Green and Winter (2011), Halim (2018), Henningham *et al.* (2017), Huebner and Cooper (2007), Martin (1998), McBride and Skene (2014), McCracken (2015), Moore (2016), O'Flaherty (2009), Platt (2018), Tale and Alefaio (2009), Wagner and Bischoff (2017), White (2009)
Photographs	Cocciolo (2017), Erde (2014), Finlinson (2017), Flinn (2011), Flinn *et al.* (2009), Halim (2018), Hamilton (2008), Huebner and Cooper (2007), Hurlbert and Sieminski (2010), Joffrion and Fernández (2015), Ketelaar (2009), Martin (1998), Moore (2016), Punzalan (2009), Rieger (2014), Wagner and Bischoff (2017)
Audio-visual materials	Allard and Ferris (2015), Anen (2017), Erde (2014), Flinn (2011, 2007), Flinn *et al.* (2009), Huebner and Cooper (2007), Ketelaar (2009), Moore (2016), Punzalan (2009), Riedlmayer and Naron (2009), Vallier (2010)
Material objects	Finnell (2013), Flinn (2011,2007), Flinn *et al.* (2009), Halim (2018), Hamilton (2008), Ketelaar (2009), McCracken (2015), Rieger (2014), Wagner and Bischoff (2017)
Correspondence	Cosson (2017), Hamilton (2008), Hurlbert and Sieminski (2010), Joffrion and Fernández (2015), Ketelaar (2009), Wagner and Bischoff (2017)
Recordings	Daniels *et al.* (2015), Huebner and Cooper (2007), Ketelaar (2009), Martin (1998), Platt (2018), Vallier (2010)
Books or journals	Flinn (2011), Flinn *et al.* (2009), Fullwood (2009), Moore (2016), Sheffield (2017)
Art	Flinn (2011), Flinn *et al.* (2009), Halim (2018), Moore (2016)
Clothing	Flinn (2011), Flinn *et al.* (2009), Moore (2016)
Meeting records and materials	Halim (2018), Ketelaar (2009), Moore (2016)
Family memorabilia	Rieger (2014), Wagner and Bischoff (2017)

Table I.
Examples of
nontraditional types of
materials collected by
community archives

By contrast, as Rodrigues (2015) notes, "Creators of community records often prefer the alternative stewardship and post-custodial approaches to custody, as they feel a deep connection and a strong sense of ownership for the records they have created" (p. 86).

Community archives increasingly secure flexible, even shared or "co-created" custody arrangements with community members and other institutions (Cook, 2013; Copeland, 2015a). An ongoing partnership between repository and creator(s), shared custody treats materials as cultural assets and foregrounds access, trust, and community values over the centralized and bureaucratized control and ownership of traditional mainstream archives (Caswell, 2014b) (Table III).

Some community archives embrace a full postcustodial approach: professional archivists manage community-created materials that remain in community custody (Ham, 1981; Postcustodial Theory of Archives, n.d.). Flinn (2007) argues, "A post-custodial model is appropriate for community archives for a number of reasons—most importantly it addresses the ambivalence that many communities feel towards depositing their archives in formal heritage institutions, but it also avoids the need for professional archivists to make difficult and often upsetting decisions about what is worth depositing and preserving, and finally given the digital nature of many of these community archives it is possible that a distributed approach to custody and preservation is more effective anyway" (p. 168).

For example, SAADA lacks—whether by design or necessity—a publicly accessible physical space. Instead, it borrows and digitizes, describes, links, and publishes

Type of ephemera	Examples
Newspapers or newsletters	Cocciolo (2017), Cosson (2017), Flinn (2011), Green and Winter (2011), Halim (2018), Hurlbert and Sieminski (2010)
Magazines or 'zines	Corvid (2014), Cosson (2017), Daniels *et al.* (2015), Fullwood (2009), Halim (2018), Moore (2016)
Flyers/leaflets	Daniels *et al.* (2015), Flinn (2011), Fullwood (2009)
Public performance, ceremony, dance, presentation, and exhibition	Eales, 1998, McCracken (2015), Tale and Alefaio (2009)
Signs, posters, or banners	Daniels *et al.* (2015), Erde (2014), Moore (2016)
Social media	Erde (2014), Fullwood (2009), McBride and Skene (2014)
Badges	Flinn (2011), Moore (2016)
Diaries	Hurlbert and Sieminski (2010), Ketelaar (2009)
Images	Allard and Ferris (2015), Punzalan (2009)
Music/song	Halim (2018), Tale and Alefaio (2009)
Maps	Hamilton (2008), Joffrion and Fernández (2015)
Programs	Cocciolo (2017), Fullwood (2009)
Reminiscences or recollections	Cosson (2017), Rieger (2014)

Table II.
Examples of ephemeral materials collected by community archives

US Virgin Islands	USA	Bastian (2002)
Future histories, rukus!, Moroccan memories, eastside community heritage, and the migrant and refugee communities forum	England	Flinn (2011), Stevens *et al.* (2010)
Nineteen Portuguese community archives	South Africa	Rodrigues (2015)
Australian women's archives project	Australia	Henningham *et al.* (2017)
Westbury community archive, South Africa	South Africa	Halim (2018)

Table III.
Examples of community archives that embrace shared custody

community materials online (Caswell, 2014a; Caswell *et al.*, 2016). Second, some form of postcustodialism prevails among seven of the twelve ethnically, sexually, geographically, politically, and racially diverse community archives in Southern California studied by Zavala *et al.* (2017)[5]. Third, the collaboration between My Baryo My Borough (a community-based arts and oral history project) and Queens Memory (Queens Library's local history project) likewise embraces respectful descriptive practices and builds trust with locals in rendering local Filipino community items accessible (Schreiner and de los Reyes, 2016). Even in such cases, however, questions persist as to who should have access, what materials should be prioritized, and how—and to whom—materials should be returned (Ormond-Parker and Sloggett, 2012).

Such alternative (post) custodial strategies channel into alternative modes of organization and representation of archival materials.

Collection development and appraisal, processing, and arrangement and description
Just as they settle upon alternative approaches to custody, so do many community archives democratize archival creation, processing, and control-*cum*-access as a fundamental part of their information work. Community archives instantiate community-centered values in at least three ways.

First, community knowledge steers community archives' collection development and appraisal work, namely in who undertakes appraisal, evaluates materials, and makes decisions overall (Cifor, 2016; Shilton and Srinivasan, 2007). In her survey of 41 popular music archives in 15 countries, for example, Baker (2016) discerns "an emphasis on democratized archival practice in which the parameters of a community archive's collection emerges [sic] from criteria drawn from the vernacular knowledge and expertise of its volunteers" (p. 178).

Second, some community archives acquire materials and make them available immediately, as opposed to undertaking traditional time- and resource-intensive processing activities. Queer music archives in Australia (Cantillon *et al.*, 2017); the Interference Archive, a Brooklyn-based institution centered on social movement culture (Sellie *et al.*, 2015); eight rural South Carolina community archives (Wagner and Bischoff, 2017)—all adopt this approach.

Third, terminology constitutes a foundation for the development and affirmation of identity (Baucom, 2018). Community archives revamp arrangement and description both to represent their materials and to provide for findability, access, and (re)use on—and often literally in—their own terms (Jimerson, 2006; Parris, 2005; Shilton and Srinivasan, 2007). This practice characterizes SAADA (Caswell, 2014a), the My Baryo My Borough–Queens Memory partnership (Schreiner and de los Reyes, 2016), and the Lavender Library and Archives Cultural Exchange (LLACE) (Wakimoto *et al.*, 2013b). LLACE, for example, rejects the Online Archive of California's (OAC's) terminology; instead, it employs the thesaurus created specifically for queer libraries by pioneering activist Dee Michel.

Reconfiguring archival principles and practices may cause tension, however. This tension can be seen in community–mainstream institution partnerships when the latter lacks experience working with community members, as is the case with the Sheffield Feminist Archive in the United Kingdom (Sadler and Cox, 2017). Further, as Newman (2011a) cautions apropos of New Zealand community archives, community-based practices may undercut archives' evidential value.

Despite such scattered misgivings, a preponderance of scholarship suggests that communities' modifications of archival principles and practices and their concordant effects on information work such as custody, collection development and appraisal, processing, and arrangement and description are both necessary and salutary.

The political terrain of community archives' information work

Even as community archives' information work revamps information organization and representation through nontraditional principles and practices and custodial arrangements, it eschews traditional notions of archival neutrality and objectivity. Control of the archive confers political power and community archives are therefore both individually and collectively political (Derrida, 1996). Much of community archives' information work involves preserve materials and making them available for reuse in service of social justice (Table IV).

Implicitly or explicitly, community archives battle hegemony—class rule shored up through experience, consciousness, and public opinion as well as through electoral politics and micro- and macroeconomic structures (Gramsci, 2000; Williams, 1985). Community archives stave off hegemonic incorporation or co-optation through infrapolitics.

Infrapolitics involves subterranean political, social, and cultural resistance tactics both material and symbolic (Scott, 1990). Community archives' political edge manifests itself forcefully in activist information work directed toward social justice, particularly by guiding present and future action, by enriching social history and collective memory, by harnessing affect, and by (re)claiming place and space physically and virtually.

Activism and social justice

Community activists such as queer people established volunteer-run archives long before professional archivists and mainstream scholars knew or cared (Marston, 1998; Novak, 2004). Whatever their scale, scope, and audience, then, community archives relate immanently to social, cultural, and political activism directed toward social justice outcomes (Flinn and Alexander, 2015). As documentary processes may abet oppression and domination whether unwittingly or deliberately, a social justice orientation strives toward full and equal human recognition and participation, fair distribution, and the acknowledgement and remedy of historical inequalities and inequities (Duff *et al.*, 2013; Punzalan and Caswell, 2016; Wallace, 2017).

As part and parcel of their activist information work, community archives counter symbolic annihilation. As Gerbner and Gross (1976) contend, "Representation in the fictional world signifies social existence; absence means symbolic annihilation. Being buffeted by events and victimized, by people denotes social impotence; ability to wrest events about, to act freely, boldly, and effectively is a mark of dramatic importance and social power" (p. 182). Extending this work, Caswell and her colleagues (2016) suggest that through their ontological, epistemological, and representational attributes, community archives "empower people marginalized by mainstream media outlets and memory institutions with the autonomy and authority to establish, enact, and reflect on their presence in ways that are complex, meaningful, substantive, and positive to them" (p. 57).

Community archives are Janus-faced: they look forward as well as backward. On the one hand, their information work informs present and future social justice activism (Lekhutile,

Future histories, rukus!, Moroccan memories, and eastside community heritage	England	Flinn (2011)
LLACE	USA	Wakimoto *et al.* (2013b)
Occupy Wall Street	USA	Erde (2014)
SAADA	USA	Caswell (2014a)
Hebridean Connections (Isle of Lewis); Salmon Bothy (Portsoy)	Scotland	Beel *et al.* (2017)
Sheffield feminist archive	England	Sadler and Cox (2017)
Lambda archives; Southeast Asian Archive (SEAA) at University of California, Irvine, Little Tokyo Historical Society (LTHS), La Historia Society of El Monte, and the studio for Southern California history	USA	Caswell *et al.* (2018; Cifor *et al.* (2018)

The George Padmore Institute, the institute of race relations, and the black cultural archives	England	Flinn and Stevens (2009)
Stories for Hope-Rwanda	Rwanda	Wallace *et al.* (2014)
SAADA	USA	Caswell (2014c)
Hebridean Connections (Isle of Lewis); Salmon Bothy (Portsoy)	Scotland	Beel *et al.* (2017)
The Heygate was home online archive, the Southwark notes archive, and the elephant amenity network Elephant and castle, South London	England	Carter (2017)
Sheffield feminist archive	England	Sadler and Cox (2017)
Citizen-data Harvest in Motion-Everywhere (CHIME)	USA	Copeland *et al.* (2017)
DataRescue	International	Currie and Paris (2018)
Westbury community archive, Johannesburg, South Africa	South Africa	Halim (2018)
Queer archives in Charlotte, North Carolina	USA	Burford (2018)
Nigerian activist-author Ken Saro-Wiwa	Nigeria	Platt (2018)
Lambda archives; Southeast Asian Archive (SEAA) at University of California, Irvine, Little Tokyo Historical Society (LTHS), La Historia Society of El Monte, the studio for Southern California history, the Compton 125 historical society, the center for the study of political graphics, Korean American digital archive, documenting the now, Chinese historical society of Southern California, ONE national gay and lesbian archives at USC, Social and Public Art Resource Center (SPARC), and transgender living archives	USA	Caswell *et al.* (2018, 2017b)

Table V.
Examples of
community archives'
work informing
present and future
activism

1998) (Table V). On the other hand, it facilitates revisioning of the past, namely in filling documentary gaps, in writing social history, and in grounding collective memory.

First, documentary gaps animate community archives' activities. Shilton and Srinivasan (2007) underline, "The longstanding archival undervaluing of multicultural narratives, and even more complex problem of a lack of recognition of what constitutes a localized record, has created a persistent gap in documentation of the meaningful narratives of a host of peoples" (p. 92). Scholars note the filling of documentary gaps concerning colonialism in the Caribbean (Bastian, 2013a; O'Flaherty, 2009) and the Pacific (Tale and Alefaio, 2009); postgenocide in Africa (Wallace *et al.*, 2014); local or popular music in the United States (Baker, 2016; Baker and Collins, 2015, 2017; Daniels *et al.*, 2015; Wallace, 2009); race, ethnicity, or nationality such as African American (Fullwood, 2009), Filipino American (Schreiner and de los Reyes, 2016), Southeast Asian American (Caswell and Mallick, 2014), and Portuguese South African (Rodrigues, 2016, 2015; Rodrigues *et al.*, 2014); indigenous, aboriginal, or formerly enslaved peoples in Canada (Allard and Ferris, 2015; McCracken, 2015), South Africa (Garaba, 2016), and Mexico (White, 2009); and feminists (Corvid, 2014; Henningham *et al.*, 2017; Moore, 2016; Sadler and Cox, 2017) and queer people (Baucom, 2018; Burford, 2018; Cifor, 2016; Fullwood, 2009; Wakimoto *et al.*, 2013a, b) in the United Kingdom, Australia, and the United States.

Filling documentary gaps may involve or aspire to documentation strategy, which takes root in Ham's (1975) call for a more representative record of human experience through planned, proactive collaboration. Extended by Samuels (1986), Booms (1987), Hackman and Warnow-Blewett (1987), Hinding (1993), Cox (1994), Ericson (1997), Samuels (1998), Malkmus (2008), and Hackman (2009), documentation strategy "guides selection and assures retention of adequate information about a specific geographic area, a topic, a process, or an event that has been dispersed throughout society" (Documentation Strategy, n.d.). Community archives appropriate and tailor documentation strategy to local needs, preferences, and proclivities (Table VI).

Not only do they encourage the filling of documentary gaps, but community archives also encourage the correction of sundry past misrepresentations and biases (e.g. reification, reduction, and stereotyping). These correctives embrace colonization and colonialism (Bastian, 2013b; Lekhutile, 1998), aboriginal populations (Kelly, 2009), colonized, enslaved, marginalized, and oppressed peoples (Flinn *et al.*, 2009), immigration (Rodrigues *et al.*, 2014), political activism (Erde, 2014), ethnic groups (Caswell and Mallick, 2014; Rodrigues *et al.*, 2014), gentrification (Casari, 2015), women's history (Henningham *et al.*, 2017), socioeconomic class and labor (Carter, 2017; Halim, 2018; Lian and Oliver, 2018), and queerness (Baucom, 2018; Parris, 2005).

Second, by illuminating previously hidden, overlooked, or dismissed materials, community archives' information work fosters social history in service of a "usable past" (Brooks, 1918, p. 337). Social history focuses on the agency of ordinary people in their everyday lives both as individuals and as communities; it embraces nontraditional sources ranging from oral history to ritual and celebration (Appleby, 2007; Kessler-Harris, 1990).

Beginning in the 1960s, social historians in the United States (heavily indebted to British scholars such as E.P. Thompson) concentrated on competing ethnic, immigrant, racial, gender, and class groups; the resulting scholarship decimated already contested generalizations about a unified white Protestant nation (Appleby, 2007; Appleby *et al.*, 1995; Blouin and Rosenberg, 2011; Jimerson, 2009; Novick, 1988). Historians globally shifted focus from meta-narratives to minor narratives, from nations to communities (Bastian, 2013b; Bastian and Alexander, 2009).

Community archives' holdings constitute "the bread and butter of social history" (Cosson, 2017, p. 50). In other words, their information work centers on curating materials that enable the construction and representation of a usable past, records that mainstream (e.g. government) institutions likely neglect. Examples include queer (Baucom, 2018; Wakimoto *et al.*, 2013a, b), working class (Carter, 2017), ethnic group (Caswell *et al.*, 2016; Kaplan, 2000), social movement (Erde, 2014), human rights (Platt, 2018), and migrant worker community archives (Lian and Oliver, 2018).

Because they largely control their own scarce, if not unique, materials, moreover, community archives may determine—democratizing or circumscribing, depending upon the context and the community—archival access and therefore use and reuse (Table VII). Communities both figuratively and literally own the raw materials from which they may construct their own history. Comments Flinn (2007), "With collections that belong to a community, deposit and public access are not a right but of [sic] matter for negotiation, partnership, and encouragement" (p. 169).

Third, community archives shore up collective memory (Foote, 1990; Jacobsen *et al.*, 2013; Schwartz and Cook, 2002; Wurl, 2005). Bastian (2013b) contends, "We are currently inhabiting the Age of Memory—an age when scholars (and archivists) not only accept memory as a type of evidence but recognize that the historical evidence in documents is as selective as memory, that both evidence and memory deserve equal consideration, and that each leads to different, but equally relevant knowledge" (p. 29).

The Mississippi band of Choctaw	USA	Galloway (2009)
Project SAVE in Watertown, Massachusetts	USA	Bastian (2013b)
SAADA	USA	Caswell and Mallick (2014)
Occupy Wall Street	USA	Erde (2014)
Stories for Hope-Rwanda	Rwanda	Wallace *et al.* (2014)
Kids in Birmingham (1963)	USA	Yaco *et al.* (2015)
Louisville Underground Music Archive (LUMA)	USA	Daniels *et al.* (2015)
Hostos Community College, New York city	USA	Casari (2015)

Table VI.
Examples of community archives borrowing from documentation strategy

Both selective and fluid, saturated with questions of power and identity, memory privileges some voices and marginalizes or even silences others (Cook, 2013). Through collective memory information work, groups forge representational connections between past and present. Whether historically accurate or not, these connections perpetuate individual and collective identity (Halbwachs, 1992; Hedstrom, 2010). In short, communities' collective memories depend upon community archives' information work, as a raft of scholarship demonstrates (Table VIII).

By filling in documentary gaps, by rescuing hidden histories, and by nurturing collective memory, community archives enable a more representative, democratized, inclusive, usable, and useful record of the past. Community archives' social justice work also encompasses affect and healing.

Affect and healing
Both a practice and a value, the ethics of care conceives of individuals not as self-sufficient and independent, but as relational and interdependent (Held, 2009). Closely aligned with feminism, it centers on empathy, trust, solidarity, and common concern. As Held (2009) concludes, justice cannot exist without care—and thus without affect and emotion.

The affective and emotional aspects of community archives' information work may further social justice outcomes (Caswell and Cifor, 2016; Cifor, 2016; Cifor and Gilliland, 2016; Henningham *et al.*, 2017). According to Cvetkovich (2014), "the centrality of feeling to the relations between private and public spheres and especially of how the intimate life of romance, the family, and the domestic sphere serves as the foundation for social relations of power" (p. 14). In other words, as Ahmed (2004) suggests, "emotions *do things*, and work to align individuals with collectives—or bodily space with social space—through the very intensity of their attachments" (p. 26). Emotional encounters with archives connect people to their past in ways that administrative or bureaucratic records cannot (Caswell and Mallick, 2014).

Affective information work with community archives affirms a community's sense of itself and promotes awareness, understanding, and belonging among community members (Eales, 1998; Flinn and Stevens, 2009). Community archives also bring persons and communities together, for example, across generations, races, and ethnicities (Burford, 2018;

Koorie Heritage archive in Australia	Australia	Huebner and Cooper (2007)
Canadian lesbian gay archives	Canada	Barriault (2009)
Nineteen Portuguese community-based organizations in Gauteng, South Africa	South Africa	Rodrigues *et al.* (2014)
Stories for Hope-Rwanda	Rwanda	Wallace *et al.* (2014)
Documenting Ferguson	USA	Atiso and Freeland (2016)
Ken Saro-Wiwa digital archives	Nigeria	Platt (2018)
Sheffield feminist archive	England	Sadler and Cox (2017)
Hostos Community College, New York city	USA	Casari (2015)
Pietermaritzburg Cluster of Theological Libraries (PCTL), KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa	South Africa	Garaba (2016)
The Compton 125 historical society, the little Tokyo historical society, the center for the study of political graphics, Korean American digital archive, documenting the now, Chinese historical society of Southern California, Lambda archives, UC-Irvine Southeast Asian archives, ONE national gay and lesbian archives at USC, La Historia society museum and archive, Social and Public Art Resource Center (SPARC), and transgender living archives.	USA	Caswell *et al.* (2017b)

Table VII.
Examples of
community archives
setting their own terms
for access

US Virgin Islands	USA	Bastian (2003, 2002)
Chilean truth commissions	Chile	Blanco-Rivera (2009)
Mississippi band of Choctaw	USA	Galloway (2009)
The international criminal tribunal for the prosecutions of persons responsible for serious violations of international humanitarian law committed in the Territory of the former Yugoslavia since 1991 (ICTY)	Former Yugoslavia	Ketelaar (2009)
Culion Leprosy Museum and Archives (CMLA)	Philippines	Punzalan (2009)
Yizkor books, the Fortunoff Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies (FVAHT), Bosnian weblogs	Multiple	Riedlmayer and Naron (2009)
Denison University (Ohio, US)	USA	Finnell (2013)
Fiji	Fiji	Tale and Alefaio (2009)
County Offaly, Ireland	Ireland	Collins Shortall (2016)
Shingwauk residential schools center	Canada	McCracken (2015)
SAADA	USA	Caswell (2014c), Caswell et al. (2016)
Rural South Carolina	USA	Wagner and Bischoff (2017)
Queer community music archives in Australia	Australia	Cantillon et al. (2017)
Elephant and castle communities in south London	England	Carter (2017)
Australian women's archives project	Australia	Henningham et al. (2017)
Shuishu archives, China	China	Lian (2017)
Westbury, South Africa	South Africa	Halim (2018)
Ken Saro-Wiwa digital archive	Nigeria	Platt (2018)

Table VIII.
Examples of community archives as stewards of collective memory

Caswell, 2014a; Flinn, 2007; Halim, 2018; Henningham et al., 2017; Huebner and Cooper, 2007; Lo, 2013; Moore, 2016; Ormond-Parker and Sloggett, 2012; Platt, 2018; Sadler and Cox, 2017; Wallace, 2009; Yaco et al., 2015).

What is more, although misuse of community knowledge risks harm (Joffrion and Fernández, 2015), community archives may enable healing or even catharsis, for example in Rwanda, Canada, Nigeria, Bosnia, or Alabama (Allard and Ferris, 2015; Platt, 2018; Riedlmayer and Naron, 2009; Wallace et al., 2014; Yaco et al., 2015); may repair colonialist violence, for example in India (Deo, 2013); and may assist international tribunals and truth and reconciliation committees, for example in Chile and in the former Yugoslavia (Bastian and Alexander, 2009; Blanco-Rivera, 2009; Ketelaar, 2009). Ultimately, scholars show community archives' political uses of affect and emotion. The latter carries over into conversations about the resonance of place and space.

Place and space
Community archives' information work affirms the politicized nature of place and space. Soja (1989) underlines "how. . .relations of power and discipline are inscribed into the apparently innocent spatiality of social life, how human geographies become filled with politics and ideology" (p. 6). On the one hand, mainstream archives may intimidate community members, thereby impeding grassroots participation, a concern expressed in the context of Victorian Koorie communities in Australia (Huebner and Cooper, 2007), Future Histories, rukus!, and the Migrant and Refugee Communities Forum in England (Stevens et al., 2010), and the Sheffield Feminist Archives, also in England (Sadler and Cox, 2017).

On the other hand, in offering space for representation, belonging, and memorialization, community archives' physicality represents a refuge or a site of resistance likely more meaningful to community members than a virtual space (Table IX). For example, queer community archives such as LLACE hold archival collections and circulating media libraries;

Queer archives	USA	Brown (2011), Caldera (2013)
Future histories, rukus!, Moroccan memories, and eastside community heritage	England	Flinn (2011)
LLACE	USA	Wakimoto *et al.* (2013a, b)
Hostos Community College	USA	Casari (2015)
Interference archive	USA	Sellie *et al.* (2015)
41 popular music community archives[6]	USA, Australia, Ghana, England, New Zealand, Germany, Sweden, Netherlands, Israel, Czech Republic, Iceland, Austria, Switzerland, Tanzania, Canada	Baker (2016)
County Offaly	Ireland	Collins Shortall (2016)
Feminist webs	England	Moore (2016)
Elephant and castle neighborhoods in South London	England	Carter (2017)
Compton 125 historical society; little Tokyo historical society; center for the study of political graphics; Korean American digital archive; documenting the now; Chinese historical society of Southern California; Lambda archives; UC-Irvine Southeast Asian archives; ONE national gay and lesbian archives at the University of Southern California; La historia society museum and archive; Social and Public Art Resource Center (SPARC); transgender living archives.	USA	Zavala *et al.* (2017)
Lambda archives; Southeast Asian Archive (SEAA) at University of California, Irvine; Little Tokyo Historical Society (LTHS); La Historia society of El Monte; and the studio for Southern California history.	USA	Caswell *et al.* (2018)

Table IX.
Examples of the
political and affective
importance of space for
community archives

they also provide meeting spaces and host public programs and nurture community pride (Wakimoto *et al.*, 2013a, b). Similarly, Brooklyn's Interference Archive exemplifies social movement archives as spaces for community development (Sellie *et al.*, 2015). This rationale applies as well to feminist archives such as Feminist Webs, a shared space where youth workers, academics, young women, and artists collapse boundaries among academia, activism, archiving, and work (Moore, 2016). In fact, community archives may not only document but anchor a neighborhood in the face of gentrification and demographic change, as studies in New York City and Southern California indicate (Casari, 2015; Zavala *et al.*, 2017).

Digital community archives
Just as with physical space, so do community archives (re)claim virtual space for information work. Since the Web blurs local and global boundaries between the inside and the outside of the archive, among academics, activists, and archivists, and among libraries, archives, and museums (LAMs), it may promote collaboration among information professionals as well as among professionals and amateurs (Allard and Ferris, 2015; Collins Shortall, 2016; Gilliland and Flinn, 2013; Henningham *et al.*, 2017; Moore, 2016; Williams, 2015).

Conversely, one cannot assume digital archives ipso facto produce—or represent—community engagement (Bak and Chen, 2014). Despite its cost efficiencies, moreover, the web cannot replicate certain attributes of community materials, e.g. tactile ones (Corvid, 2014).

Communities may even choose not to digitize, staking their historical memory to a physical space, or opting for a circumscribed Web presence (Wagner and Bischoff, 2017). Both opportunities and challenges thus accrue to digital initiatives.

Opportunities. Distributed, networked, and nimble, digital like place-based community archives seem well-placed to collect, preserve, and enable the (re)use of materials that escape large, mainstream institutions (Hurley, 2016). They extend the promise of greater participation and access, albeit for those with access to or ownership of the necessary technology. Nine variegated examples stand out.

First, as shown by Scotland's Cultural Repositories and Information Systems (CURIOS) project, rural communities harness digital platforms to pluralize their memory work, thereby building their communities and reconnecting with their diasporas (e.g. through genealogy and ancestral tourism). Through this they foster a sense of identity, history, memory, belonging, agency, place, and resilience (Beel *et al.*, 2017).

Second, digital technology permits aboriginal communities, for instance those in Canada and Australia, to interpret, present, and reuse their cultural materials for community development, genealogy, commemoration, land rights claims, traditional knowledge systems, or restitution (Ormond-Parker and Sloggett, 2012). Both a rich media library facilitating access and a metadata collector for gathering information about items in the library, the Koorie Heritage Archive Project renders the digital archive a "living meaningful resource" that "bring[s] life to old customs by using modern technology" (Huebner and Cooper, 2007, pp. 20, 21). The University of Manitoba's Digital Archives and Marginalized Communities Project (DAMC) similarly leverages the Internet as "a key organizing and dissemination space for commemorations posted by grassroots organizations struggling to foreground the concerns of Indigenous women in their antiviolence, antipoverty, and feminist work" (Allard and Ferris, 2015, p. 362).

Third, digital platforms help postcolonial communities, for example, in Nigeria to own their stories, thereby contributing to positive identity formation and empowerment. The Ken Saro-Wiwa Digital Archive constitutes an online community space and an internationally accessible exhibition. Platt (2018) asserts, "This dual process of restoring a legacy of activism to a community and of narrating a new identity using that legacy might be termed a 'restor(y)ing' process, where ideas of repair, community identity/story development and returning a significant activist archive to its relevant community context are all equally significant" (p. 153).

Fourth, refugee Weblogs from postgenocide Bosnia commemorate lost hometowns and family members and bring dispersed survivors together in "virtual villages" (Riedlmayer and Naron, 2009). Collective undertakings by groups from particular Bosnian towns, these Weblogs usually include a history of community until the 1992–1995 war, a necrology, photographs and drawings, and the addresses of fellow survivors.

Fifth, feminist digital community archives such as the Australian Women's Archives Project facilitate activism digitally through a distributed, noncustodial, networked model. Predicated upon cocreation and cocuration, the project provides a clearinghouse through a Web register, uses open source technology, and encourages users to expand and improve project data. Community-centric, it encourages "archival autonomy—participation with their own voice and degrees of control over their archival representation" (Henningham *et al.*, 2017, p. 104).

Sixth, civil rights digital community archives such as *Kids in Birmingham (1963)* suggest that archives may capture the views of bystanders in momentous historical events. "A community archive that is neither a traditional community or [sic] a traditional archive," *Kids* commingles activists and organizers, observers, students, educators, journalists, and researchers in a virtual historical community space (Yaco *et al.*, 2015, p. 416). The space creates a new community: it publicizes content and makes project contributors available for interviews with media, educators, and students. The combined investment of contributors and users inspires younger generations to join social justice efforts. Ultimately, *Kids* provides

catharsis, renders a nuanced, bottom-up picture of Birmingham in the movement, and helps people place their own experiences in historical context (Yaco *et al.*, 2015).

Seventh, ethnic group-focused digital archives such as SAADA diversify the historical record by providing public access to digitized and born-digital community materials that the archive's staff describe and link to other materials (Caswell and Mallick, 2014). Of note is the organization's First Days project—brief, subjective audio, visual, and written accounts by community members and explicitly intended for archival inclusion ("digital participatory microhistory").

Eighth, digital community archives foster noncommercial, voluntary music sharing that encourages broad participation and access. Audiovisual archiving of vernacular music in Northern India represents "gestures of community members towards claiming multivalent subjectivities—as cultural mediators and as technological experts" (Deo, 2013, p. 15). Similarly, the music of the Grateful Dead spawned an "aggregated-disaggregated taper and trader community" that provides unprecedented access not only to performances themselves but also to germane metadata (Wallace, 2009, p. 170).

Ninth, public libraries may cocreate digital community archives by encouraging community members to contribute born-digital items (Copeland, 2015a). While users contribute knowledge of local history, customs, and events, affirming their personal investment in supporting local institutions, librarians provide technical infrastructure and expertise. The public library may thereby constitute a "living digital community archive that documents and preserves the local heritage of its community as it is happening" (Copeland, 2015a, p. 7).

From public libraries to popular music, ethnicity to civil rights, feminism to postgenocide, postcolonialism to aboriginal and indigenous people—digital platforms enrich or even constitute many types of community archives. But the digital brings challenges to information work, too.

Challenges. Challenges faced by digital community archives include not only financial but also technological and human resources. First, technological challenges include physical threats, hardware and software format changes (and eventual obsolescence), standards, accessibility and findability, functionality and usability, digitization or records capture, cataloging, and Web and social media archiving (Anen, 2017; Atiso and Freeland, 2016; Baker and Collins, 2015, 2017; Beel *et al.*, 2017; Cocciolo, 2017; Collins Shortall, 2016; Copeland *et al.*, 2017; Erde, 2014; Fullwood, 2009; Ormond-Parker and Sloggett, 2012; Riedlmayer and Naron, 2009).

Second, three human resource challenges also arise. Projects may fall prey to a lack of IT knowledge, training, and support in archival systems, principles, file formats, metadata, standards, and method; to ownership and copyright concerns; and to ethical or trust issues concerning autonomy, custody, and stewardship, and their potential impacts on the community economically and culturally (Baker and Collins, 2015, 2017; Caswell, 2014a; Caswell *et al.*, 2017a; Cocciolo, 2017; Deo, 2013; Erde, 2014; Hurley, 2016; Long *et al.*, 2017; Ormond-Parker and Sloggett, 2012; Wagner and Bischoff, 2017). Finally, despite their community-building potential, digital community archives may also etiolate human relationships. As Wallace (2009) laments of the evolution of music sharing, "though [the Internet] affords the ability to mass an enormous collection quickly and cheaply without having to navigate taper politics and hierarchies, it significantly corrodes the sentient human relationships that long formed the foundation and essence of the trading community" (p. 186).

Whether through overt activism and social justice work, affect and healing, or place and space both physical and virtual, community archives are politically charged. Politics also impinges upon the collaborations and partnerships forged among community archives and mainstream institutions.

Community/mainstream collaborations and partnerships
While past unsatisfactory collaborations may engender wariness, many community archives remain amenable to respectful, trusting, and sustained collaborations (Flinn, 2011; Flinn *et al.*,

2009; Rodrigues *et al.*, 2014; Sadler and Cox, 2017; Stevens *et al.*, 2010). In other words, the community/mainstream archive relationship need not prove adversarial (Baker, 2016; Cosson, 2017; Paschild, 2012). Avoiding duplication of effort, pooling resources, sharing knowledge and expertise, addressing misinterpretations of the past—all represent potential rewards (Collins Shortall, 2016; Garaba, 2016; Joffrion and Fernández, 2015). Scholars home in on three benefits of collaborative information work for community archives and five for mainstream archives.

Benefits
Community archives stand to profit from collaborations or partnerships with mainstream repositories in three ways. First, by offering training in and advice on preservation, digitization, documentation, copyright, storage, cataloging, sharing space, and outreach (e.g. fundraising, exhibition-making, and event organizing), mainstream archivists help communities preserve their past and enrich their collective memories (Bastian, 2003; Flinn, 2011; Stevens *et al.*, 2010). Second, through mainstream partnerships, community archives increase their public visibility, relevance, and legitimacy (Flinn *et al.*, 2009; Parris, 2005; Sadler and Cox, 2017; Stevens *et al.*, 2010). Third, such partnerships contribute to physical and digital persistence and sustainability by providing resources such as infrastructure (cyber or physical), secure storage, staff, space, and funding (Daniels *et al.*, 2015; Erde, 2014; Fullwood, 2009; Henningham *et al.*, 2017; Joffrion and Fernández, 2015; Lau *et al.*, 2012; Parris, 2005; Rodrigues *et al.*, 2014; Sadler and Cox, 2017; Santamaria-Wheeler *et al.*, 2015).

Mainstream archives also benefit from collaborations or partnerships. First, partnerships promote access and inclusivity, particularly by drawing in new users and by cementing the relevance of repositories to existing users (Erde, 2014; Flinn, 2011; Santamaria-Wheeler *et al.*, 2015; Sheffield, 2017; Stevens *et al.*, 2010; Wakimoto *et al.*, 2013a, b; Zavala *et al.*, 2017). Second, community archiving encourages professionally credentialed archivists to evolve their roles from guardians, elite experts, protectors, and keepers to educators, mentors, facilitators, coaches, guides, and collaborators (Cook, 2013; Lenstra, 2014; Stevens *et al.*, 2010; Wakimoto *et al.*, 2013a). Third, community archives stimulate mindfulness, reflexivity, and reflection on work practices, which may increase transparency (Caswell, 2014b; Copeland, 2015b; Stevens *et al.*, 2010; Wakimoto *et al.*, 2013a). Fourth, community archives represent a wellspring for specialist subject knowledge that redounds to the benefit of mainstream repositories (Erde, 2014; Flinn, 2011; Stevens *et al.*, 2010; Wakimoto *et al.*, 2013b). Fifth and finally, community archives increase the diversity of mainstream repositories' collections and their exhibitions (Daniels *et al.*, 2015; Erde, 2014; Flinn, 2011; Fullwood, 2009; Stevens *et al.*, 2010; Wakimoto *et al.*, 2013b; Zavala *et al.*, 2017).

Obstacles
Manifest benefits aside, partnerships or collaborations between community and mainstream archives face two major hurdles: balancing sustainability and autonomy and establishing trust.

First, despite the advantages of collaboration, the relationship between autonomy, independence, and self-governance, on the one hand, and resources and sustainability, on the other, remains a central dilemma (Erde, 2014; Flinn *et al.*, 2009; Joffrion and Fernández, 2015; Wagner and Bischoff, 2017). Collaborations immanently involve stronger and weaker participants with their own priorities and perspectives; suffice it to say that navigating these power differentials demands diplomacy (Eales, 1998; Newman, 2011a).

For example, members of a grassroots music community may be unfamiliar with the mainstream institution's mission or may discern barriers their professional counterparts do not; hence, they may be chary of surrendering their materials to an academic institution

(Daniels *et al.*, 2015). Similarly, tribal and nontribal partners may define cultural knowledge, intellectual freedom, ownership and intellectual control, and open access quite differently, engendering friction (Joffrion and Fernández, 2015). As Allard and Ferris (2015) maintain, "non-Indigenous team members must actively resist the colonizing patriarchal impulse to appropriate, codify, and assert ownership over spaces, actions, and knowledge/ways of knowing that are not theirs" (p. 372). Finally, as the case of Shuishu archives in Guizhou province, China, suggests, establishing mechanisms for cooperation and participation remains a central point of negotiation—and potential tension (Lian, 2017).

Achieving equitable partnerships demands ongoing commitment, investment, and communication among all stakeholders (Caswell, 2014b; Joffrion and Fernández, 2015; Santamaria-Wheeler *et al.*, 2015; Shilton and Srinivasan, 2007). Consensus-based decision-making requires frequent meetings and a concomitantly high tolerance for "process"; achieving the optimal balance remains a terrific, if not insurmountable, stumbling block (Caswell *et al.*, 2017a; Daniels *et al.*, 2015).

Second, partnerships hinge on trust (Burford, 2018; Daniels *et al.*, 2015; Eales, 1998; Huebner and Cooper, 2007; Lian, 2017; McBride and Skene, 2014; Schreiner and de los Reyes, 2016). Allard and Ferris (2015) conclude, "Trusting relationships with communities emerge from practices that have very little to do with archiving. Instead, they develop through shared goals, mutually agreed upon benefits for all parties, and a demonstrated support of community activism" (p. 377).

Trust may be cultivated by transparency in the mainstream institution's purpose and representation, by its genuine, authentic, and sensitive commitment to and communication with community members, by its appropriate use of and access to archival material, by addressing privacy and confidentiality concerns proactively, by working with community-designated consultants, and by establishing and communicating clear but flexible, culturally respectful, project goals and schedules (Atiso and Freeland, 2016; Joffrion and Fernández, 2015; Ormond-Parker and Sloggett, 2012; Rodrigues, 2016; Shilton and Srinivasan, 2007; Stevens *et al.*, 2010).

Depending upon the context, collaborations and partnerships between community and mainstream archives may encounter challenges based on autonomy and trust. Conversely, both may benefit. On the one hand, community archives may profit from mainstream archives and archivists' training and advice, increased public visibility and legitimacy, and more robust physical and digital persistence. On the other, mainstream archives may profit from community archives and archivists in increased access and inclusivity, in professionally credentialed archivists channeling their expertise into mentoring, in promoting reflexive and transparent work practices, in capturing specialist subject knowledge, and in diversifying their collections.

Key challenges in community archives' information work

Aside from the challenges inhering in collaborative information work, community archives' stakeholders grapple with intracommunity and intercommunity tensions and with sustainability.

Intracommunity and intercommunity tensions

Eales (1998) insightfully asks, "The memories of even one individual are selective and often contradictory; how then to explore the diversity of a wider collective, integrity of the broader whole?" Community archives stakeholders struggle with tensions based on identity, ideology, and group loyalty (Kaplan, 2000). Internal fractiousness is likely, representational claims are ever-contested, and silences and marginalizations persist (Flinn, 2011; Lenstra, 2014; Ormond-Parker and Sloggett, 2012; Rolan, 2017). "The perception that communities are a harmonious whole is seldom accurate," notes Copeland *et al.* (2017) (p. 110). Communities

develop their own internal hierarchies, for that matter (Bak and Chen, 2014). As a result, community participation ipso facto renders collections "either open to deliberate manipulation by ethnic group members or susceptible to the involuntary bias of self-selection, as specific aspects or factions of ethnic communities may get overrepresented" (Daniel, 2014, p. 195).

Not only internal tensions but also tensions among communities may surface. As Cox (2009) notes, "a cacophony of voices and conflicting interpretations…can set one community against another" (p. 257). Community like mainstream archives may marginalize, silence, or even exclude other groups on the basis of class or gender or race (Flinn, 2011, 2007).

In Northern Ireland, for instance, one community's sense of identity and its interpretation of history may set it apart, even alienate it, from others (Slater, 2008). Similarly, in Portuguese South African communities, political infighting and mistrust supperates (Rodrigues, 2015, 2016; Rodrigues et al., 2014). Apropos of social movement archives, Sellie et al. (2015) remind us not to idealize coalition-building efforts. Given possibilities for conflict, in fact, Cox (2009) and Paschild (2012) persuasively question whether identity constitutes a viable foundation for community archives.

To mobilize communities in the face of such tensions, Caswell (2014c) appeals to Spivak's (Gross, 1985) strategic essentialism: "the deployment of essentialist identity categories by marginalized groups in order to organize for political empowerment" (p. 40). Strategic essentialism, Caswell (2014c) elaborates, "explains how we…can simultaneously build archives around identity categories *and* collect materials that denaturalize the categories themselves" (p. 41).

Tensions within and tensions among communities and identities and the ways in which those tensions play out remain underexplored. It is unclear whether strategic essentialism constitutes a viable or durable strategy to reify community identity temporarily for activist purposes. It is similarly unclear how such multifaceted tensions impact the sustainability of community archives themselves.

Sustainability
The ability to function over time in accord with a community's original goals, sustainability challenges plague most community archives physical and digital alike (Bastian and Alexander, 2009; Flinn, 2011). Sustainability relies on individual initiative, resources, outreach, and succession.

Individual initiative
As Kepner's pioneering "accidental" archive, which gestated in 1942 and evolved into the ONE International Gay & Lesbian Archives, attests, community archives are grounded in and sustained by individuals' personal initiative and by their emotional, physical, political, and financial investment (Barriault, 2009; Burford, 2018; Caswell and Mallick, 2014; Collins Shortall, 2016; Corvid, 2014; Finnell, 2013; Garaba, 2016; Gilliland and Flinn, 2013; Halim, 2018; Henningham et al., 2017; Kepner, 1998; Lian and Oliver, 2018; Marston, 1998; Novak, 2004; Parris, 2005; Platt, 2018; Rodrigues, 2016; Rodrigues et al., 2014; Sadler and Cox, 2017; Wakimoto et al., 2013b; Wolfe, 1998).

For example, Fullwood (2009) collected black gay and lesbian materials for a decade and stored them in his apartment before establishing the Black Gay and Lesbian Archive. The Interference Archive meanwhile germinated in a Brooklyn (New York) warehouse as the private collection of two friends seeking to curate a legacy of "creative activism" (Sellie et al., 2015, p. 458). In a third example, a Hostos Community College (New York) faculty member began collecting materials in 1970 and donating them in 2004 (Casari, 2015). Finally, a British expatriate in Hong Kong's curiosity resulted in Gwulo.com (Lo, 2013). In the end,

sustainability may hinge on the continued participation of the founder(s) (Baker and Collins, 2015, 2017).

Resources
Although resource concerns include physical space, financial and human resources are most important for information work (Baker and Collins, 2015, 2017; Flinn, 2011; Gilliland and Flinn, 2013; Hall, 2001; Parris, 2005; Platt, 2018; Sadler and Cox, 2017; Slater, 2008; Wagner and Bischoff, 2017; Zavala *et al.*, 2017).

First, community archives often lack stable, much less sufficient, financial resources (Bak and Chen, 2014; Baker, 2016; Corvid, 2014; Green and Winter, 2011; Henningham *et al.*, 2017; Lian and Oliver, 2018; Newman, 2011b; Paschild, 2012; Rodrigues, 2016; Slater, 2008; Welland, 2017). Neoliberalism translates into reduced funding for public sector, which disproportionately hurts smaller and more geographically remote community archives (Cifor, 2016). One study of research and academic library–community partnerships found that the financial burden rested solely on the library in more than three-quarters (78 percent) of the cases examined (Santamaria-Wheeler *et al.*, 2015). Incorporating as a nonprofit organization is one palliative, but possibilities for more reliable or substantial funding appear slim (Newman, 2011a; Wakimoto *et al.*, 2013b).

In this vein, community archives rely on a grab-bag of funding sources. Other nonprofits, external partnerships, in-kind support, donations, fees from visiting groups and classes, and membership dues—community archives resort to all these strategies, often in combination. Most important, however, are grants, namely from government agencies, professional associations, and foundations (Casari, 2015; McCracken, 2015; Schreiner and de los Reyes, 2016; Sellie *et al.*, 2015; Wagner and Bischoff, 2017; Wakimoto *et al.*, 2013b).

It is no wonder, then, that fundraising looms as many community archives' biggest challenge (Caswell, 2014c; Caswell and Mallick, 2014). For instance, South Carolina community archives solicit funds through conventional mail and annual galas (Wagner and Bischoff, 2017). The Canadian Lesbian and Gay Archives meanwhile holds fashion and drag shows, dances, a Pride run, and an AIDS benefit (Barriault, 2009). But such efforts scarcely constitute reliable ongoing support.

Exacerbating financial sustainability, community archives resist conventional archival metrics (Caswell, 2014a). Funders increasingly demand that community archives provide quantitative evidence—no matter how specious—such as number of users, number of collections acquired or processed, and various educational metrics (Caswell *et al.*, 2017b). Scholars have yet to propose appropriate alternative valuations.

Second, like financial resources, human resources are stretched thin (Baker and Collins, 2015, 2017; Corvid, 2014; Eales, 1998; Flinn, 2011; Green and Winter, 2011; Lau *et al.*, 2012; Lian and Oliver, 2018; Newman, 2011a; Rodrigues, 2016; Sadler and Cox, 2017; Slater, 2008; Wagner and Bischoff, 2017; Wakimoto *et al.*, 2013b). The Interference Archive, for example relies solely upon volunteer labor, which means not only that it is open for limited hours (four days per week), but that it limits who may participate, as not everyone is able to donate the time and resources (Sellie *et al.*, 2015). More troubling, more than three-quarters (78 percent) of respondents in one US study reported that no affiliated community members volunteered at the archive (Santamaria-Wheeler *et al.*, 2015). Such worrisome findings indicate an urgent need for outreach to become routine information work.

Outreach
Community archives may help forge a community, but they also may sequester or even sunder it (Caswell *et al.*, 2016; Eales, 1998; Lian and Oliver, 2018). Sustainability therefore rests

upon community awareness, interest, engagement, trust, and support (Atiso and Freeland, 2016; Finnell, 2013; Newman, 2011a; Vallier, 2010; Wakimoto *et al.*, 2013b; Welland, 2017).

Like fundraising, outreach strategies run the gamut. As Wolfe (1998) recalls of the Lesbian Herstory Archive, "We started our collection strategy by going anywhere that lesbians might be present—bars, people's houses, churches and synagogues. With us we would take archival material in a shopping bag. Then we would speak about why it was important to save our history. We would talk about why it was important to future generations of lesbians to know that there had been a long history of lesbian life."

Outreach includes publications (online or print or both), personal interactions, hosting events (films, exhibits, interpretive programs, presentations, lectures, readings, talks, and historical re-enactments), and virtual overtures such as websites, email or listservs, and social media such as blogs, Facebook, and Twitter (Barriault, 2009; Caswell and Mallick, 2014; Cosson, 2017; Daniels *et al.*, 2015; Eales, 1998; Finlinson, 2017; Fullwood, 2009; Green and Winter, 2011; Halim, 2018; Henningham *et al.*, 2017; Lian and Oliver, 2018; Rodrigues *et al.*, 2014; Santamaria-Wheeler *et al.*, 2015; Yaco *et al.*, 2015). Yet scholars offer little specific information about the success of these strategies—or how success may be defined appropriately.

Succession
Given the often decisive importance of individual initiative, both contingency planning and succession remain profound obstacles (Baker, 2016; Baker and Collins, 2017; Flinn, 2011; Gilliland and Flinn, 2013; Ormond-Parker and Sloggett, 2012). Most important, community archives struggle to promote intergenerational engagement (Zavala *et al.*, 2017). This concern stands out in varied contexts, from Japanese Americans to LGBTQ people, from Portuguese South Africans to Shuishu (Lian, 2017; Parris, 2005; Paschild, 2012; Rodrigues, 2016; Rodrigues *et al.*, 2014). Facing the daunting challenges of succession, community archives may earmark collections for donation to another community archive, as does LLACE, or to a mainstream institution (Wakimoto *et al.*, 2013b). Sellie *et al.* (2015) even argue that community archives are not failures per se if they prove unable to preserve their collections indefinitely.

Succession, outreach, resources, and individual initiative—all remain vital if not insuperable challenges for community archives of all stripes. Neoliberalism remains a harsh taskmaster (Bourdieu, 1998).

Future research
Often self-identified activists themselves, scholars maintain a sanguine perspective concerning and advance ambitious claims for community archives' usefulness. But as Flinn and Stevens (2009) hedge, "Many claims about the value of community archives are arguably either inadequately supported by the data or insufficiently generalizable" (p. 19). Community archives therefore demand robust further research. Both analytical and methodological questions demand scrutiny.

First, scholars have mostly shied away from discussing conflict within or among communities. Fruitful questions might include: how does intersectionality complicate notions of community and thus of representation and belonging in community archives (Crenshaw, 1989, 1991)? In other words, who speaks on behalf of or determines how to represent a community in the context of a given community archive, why, and how do they justify their position of relative privilege? Perhaps most important, does community archives' information work shore up possible internal hierarchies such as patriarchy or ethnocentrism?

Second, scholars characterize community archives work as "inherently political" (Caswell, 2014b, p. 31; Gilliland and Flinn, 2013, p. 5). But if everything is political, is anything political? In other words, does the analytical category risk losing its usefulness?

Along these lines, how may community archives parlay information-based infrapolitics into strength macropolitically, especially electorally? It is one thing to decry neoliberalism and to claim community archives make political interventions, but rather another to propose viable strategies for policy action. This issue takes on special significance given the recent onslaught of the right wing globally.

Third, scholars might probe sustainability. What types of outreach are most successful and why? How might stakeholders develop appropriate metrics and leverage them? What factors contribute to younger generations investing resources in community archives? What strategies are most effective for securing funding, particularly given the seemingly perpetual imperilment of government funding streams, at least in the United States? Should stakeholders worry about a Matthew effect, that is, a handful of community archives dominating the resource representational landscape at the expense of those lacking resources?

Fourth, we have yet to witness a "user turn" in community archives scholarship mirroring the one that occurred in the 1980s with mainstream archives. More bottom-up perspectives building on Caswell *et al.* (2018) would be fruitful. How many and what types of users specifically do community archives have? What benefits do they derive from these archives? Do some types of community archives attract more users than others? Who are the users most likely to contribute their labor and other resources?

Fifth, scholars might explore a more diverse array of methods, make more explicit their methodological debts, and perhaps most important, justify their chosen methods. Previous work tends to rely on qualitative methods, anecdotal evidence, small sample sizes, and unrepresentative sample populations. Common approaches include one-off case studies, ethnographies, action research, and interviews. Many other methodological approaches might also prove fruitful.

Sixth and finally, this paper centers on published and peer-reviewed literature and overrepresents scholarship on North America and the United Kingdom. How might unpublished or non-peer-reviewed literature contribute to or complicate this literature? Are there possibilities for collaborative authorship among various stakeholders (especially users themselves) in more diverse publication venues? What is the best channel for promoting the value of community archives to diverse audiences beyond the academy?

As these research questions and the extant body of published literature indicate, the sheer diversity and potentiality of community archives' information work merit further study—and further understanding. At their best, community archives may bring to life an archives, to borrow Abraham Lincoln's phrase, of, by, and for the people.

Notes

1. Databases included Library Literature and Information Science Full Text, Library and Information Science Abstracts (LISA), Web of Science, ProQuest Research Library, and JSTOR.

2. The term amateur is not intended pejoratively. Rather, it simply denotes someone who is fond of or has a taste for something—one who pursues something as a pastime, not professionally (*OED*).

3. Archival value is "The ongoing usefulness or significance of records, based on the administrative, legal, fiscal, evidential, or historical information they contain, justifying their continued preservation" (Archival value, n.d.).

4. "Materials, usually printed documents, created for a specific, limited purpose, and generally designed to be discarded after use" ("Ephemera," n.d.).

5. Archives included the Compton 125 Historical Society, the Little Tokyo Historical Society, The Center for the Study of Political Graphics, Korean American Digital Archive, Documenting the Now, Chinese Historical Society of Southern California, Lambda Archives, UC-Irvine Southeast Asian Archives, ONE National Gay and Lesbian Archives at USC, La Historia Society Museum and Archive, Social and Public Art Resource Center (SPARC), and Transgender Living Archives.

6. The Archive of Contemporary Music (USA); Australian Country Music Hall of Fame (Australia); Australian Jazz Museum (Australia); Bokoor African Popular Music Archives Foundation (BAPMAF) (Ghana); The British Archive of Country Music (England); Coventry Music Museum (England); Editions of You (England); Elvis & Hollywood Legends Museum (USA); Graceland Too (USA); Harvey Dickson Country Music Centre (Australia); Heart of Texas Country Music Museum (USA); Hector Country Music Heritage Museum (New Zealand); International Rock-A-Billy Hall of Fame (USA); Jazz Museum Bix Eiben Hamburg (Germany); Jim Reeves Museum (Sweden); KD's Elvis Presley Museum (New Zealand); Klaus-Kuhnke-Archiv für Populäre Musik (Germany); Lippmann+rau-Musikarchiv (Germany); Museum RockArt (Netherlands); The Music Box of Zami (Israel); National Cleveland-Style Polka Hall of Fame (USA); National Jazz Archive (England); Nederlands Jazz Archief (Netherlands); PopMuseum (Czech Republic); Queensland Jazz Archive (Australia); Ramones Museum (Germany); Rhode Island Music Hall of Fame (USA); Rock Museum (Germany); Rokkheimur Rúnars Júlíussonar (Iceland); Sarasota Music Archive (USA); Sheet Music Archive of New Zealand Charitable Trust (New Zealand); The Sound Preservation Association of Tasmania (Australia); South Australian Jazz Archive (Australia); Sr-Archiv Osterreichischer Popularmusik (Austria); SwissJazzOrama (Switzerland); Tanzania Heritage Project (Tanzania); Taranaki Country Music Hall of Fame (New Zealand); Tina Turner Museum at Flagg Grove School (USA); Tónlistarsafn Íslands (Iceland); Ulli Schroeder's stones Fan Museum (Germany); Youngtown Rock N Roll Museum (Canada).

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