

## **Going beyond Data Collection in Ethnography: *Options for Bridging the Gap between Researchers and Archivists***

*Why aren't archivists and librarians, early leaders in the profession, more prominent and visible in oral history circles today? Why hasn't the role of oral history in the library been a topic of discussion in recent scholarship? (Swain 355)*

### ***Abstract***

This paper investigates options for bridging the missing link between ethnographic field research and archiving. The paper interrogates the place of archiving in the entire fieldwork process and the roles played by researchers and archivists to promote access. While a number of reasons explain the gap between research and archiving, this paper identifies lack of collaboration as the main challenge. Borrowing from the postmodernist theoretical framework, the paper argues that archivists cannot detach themselves from data collection because decisions they make are not objective but personal. Our closing observation is that digital technology, in spite of its many advantages, may not deliver all that it promises to data collection and archiving. There is need to retain traditional archiving methods for their reliability and cost effectiveness.

Key Words: collection, archiving, collaboration, access, digital technology