Archives have had difficulty acquiring records of controversial subjects such as child abuse that society has deemed shameful and often prefers to ignore. Institutional records do contain information on child abuse, but it has not been made available to archives or sought by archives. Furthermore, institutional records often reflect more the perspective of the social workers or other professionals who have created them than the people they are trying to help. The silence and secrecy surrounding child abuse are also mirrored by the meagre store of personal records in archival repositories that document abuse. However, child abuse survivors have begun to speak out about their experiences. In addition, counseling professionals have recognized that writing about their experiences is a powerful method by which survivors can come to terms with abuse they endured as children. The proposed Child Abuse Survivor Archive at the University of Manitoba would serve as a place where child abuse survivors could deposit personal accounts of their experiences, which would also be available for historical and other research purposes. This thesis examines the proposed archive as an example of an archival response to a controversial subject that is difficult to document. It discusses the topic in light of previous efforts to document other controversial subjects such as prostitution and homosexuality. The thesis contends that greater openness is society about addressing child abuse, the emergence of therapeutic writing in counselling literature, and changes in thinking about archival theory offer intellectual support for this distinctive archive. The thesis suggests that the proposed archive challenges conventional archival theory in ways that are necessary if controversial and difficult to document subjects are to be addressed by archives.