

Preserving Organizational Records

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Like individuals, anthropological associations and organizations produce and collect a wide variety of documents related to the profession. The records of anthropology's institutions are as important for the history of the discipline and for the understanding of its development and practice as are those of individual practitioners. Much of the discussion in the last chapter, dealing with guidelines for individual anthropologists, applies also to organizations. This paper takes up the issues specifically affecting professional societies, institutions, and other organizations.

Ambivalent or casual attitudes toward saving records are as much a problem of anthropological institutions as of individuals. After reviewing the archiving and retention programs of the American Anthropological Association, the Society for American Archaeology, the American Folklore Society, and the American Ethnological Society, one of us (Woodbury) concluded that anthropology has lost much through happenstance, accident, the attempt of certain individuals to edit history for their own ends, and lack of foresight.

Anthropology's institutions include, in addition to professional associations, a variety of other kinds of organizations whose materials are invaluable to the historical record: academic departments, research centers, museums, government agencies, and funders. Each of these entities has a past, a present, and a future. Each has an identity defined by its current activities and purposes but formed by its past, which is held in its records. Institutional records document important transactions and decisions, as well as debates about the nature and practice of the discipline. Such records contain an organization's collective memory. Without them, the only sources for understanding anthropology's history and corporate identity will be individual memory and published accounts. In the case of organizations whose activities and policies influence the agenda of the field, their documentation may be critical for future research.

Institutions face the same problems as individuals in deciding what to do with their records: which ones should be retained in order to adequately inform future generations of the activities and decisions that were

important for the field? If no one is responsible for preserving records, it is almost certain that they will eventually be discarded, lost or dispersed. Officers of associations and officials of organizations must set up records retention programs to ensure that the documents of their history are systematically preserved.

At one level, the problems of preserving an association's or organization's records are conceptual. What should be saved, and who should decide: the organization itself, the professional archivist, or someone representing the viewpoint of the researcher/user? How should various (sometimes conflicting) interests be balanced in deciding what to retain, destroy, or transfer to an archive? What are the legal requirements, needs of current programs, obligations to various constituents, value to future scholarship? At another level, the problems are practical, logistical, and financial. Both kinds of problems need to be addressed.

Guidelines for Associations

Each anthropological association should develop policies regarding its records, which should be communicated to new officers and published so that all members know of them. The guidelines should clearly state which records are to be kept, and when and where they are to be transferred. Each association should also have a history and documentation committee that is charged with the retention of corporate memory, history, and identity.¹ The chair of this committee, who should sit on the executive board, should be responsible for beginning or continuing an archival program and for transferring records to the designated repository in a timely fashion. The committee should also be charged with contacting all past association officers to determine whether they have historical records that should be transferred to the archives.

In general, any record that was created in the routine performance or extraordinary business of an office or committee and that demonstrates the functioning of the association should be retained. Correspondence, minutes of meetings, personnel records, and requisitions are created daily and are often essential for ongoing operations. There are also permanently valuable non-current records that document special activities, such as task forces.

As with personal papers, some association records are more useful than others. At a minimum, the following records should be retained:

- Official records necessary for the transaction of business (i.e. articles of incorporation, by-laws, signature authorizations)
- Membership lists and other official information on members; official polls, election results
- Correspondence
- Office files for each officer
- Files concerning the history of the association
- Committee, general, and executive session minutes
- Policy statements

- Records relating to the association office
- Reports
- Publications, including newsletters, journals, research reports, occasional papers
- Abstracts and programs of meetings
- Publicity (both that generated by the association as press releases and unsolicited media coverage)
- Audio-visual materials
- Financial records

Certain types of records must be preserved to meet legal requirements. Although requirements vary by jurisdiction, there are some kinds of fiscal and personnel records that must be retained everywhere. Other legal documents, such as wills naming the association as beneficiary, deeds, and contracts, must also be systematically held. If there is any doubt as to whether a record should be retained for ongoing business, transferred to a repository, or discarded, it is better to keep it and consult with the archivist rather than dispose of it.

Many anthropologists spend a good portion of their professional lives working on committees, holding office, writing for newsletters, organizing symposia, and performing other services. Thus, significant association records may rest in personal or department files at risk from colleagues, loving relatives, or new brooms. Should these materials be kept as part of the individual's papers or with those of the association? Are they the intellectual and documentary property of the individual or of the organization? There are no easy answers, because records reflect both individual careers and institutional corporate histories.

Correspondence is often difficult to categorize because more than one topic may be included in a given letter. As a rule, the correspondence of association officials should be separated from personal files and transferred to the designated repository at the close of a term of office. (Copies may be made for the individual's files.) At the very least, it can be asserted that individuals do not have the right to destroy papers related to their association responsibilities (or instruct that they be destroyed at their death), as has happened in the past.

Editors' files contain valuable records, but they can present problems of ethical handling. Appraisals of manuscripts by reviewers, rejection letters, and any correspondence concerning material submitted to a journal are privileged and should not be available for immediate use by researchers. However, they could be archived with time restrictions. Many editors have opted to destroy such files because of assurances of anonymity given when the material was obtained, but this practice does not serve the interests of history. Associations need policies on these issues, which should be reflected in records retention schedules.

It is the responsibility of each anthropological association to designate a repository for its records. This issue should not be left for the time when records become too extensive to transmit to the next officer or when a needed item cannot be found (as happens all too often). All of an association's records should be placed in a single repository, such as the National Anthropological Archives. Certain associations will have

institutional connections that determine the choice of repository. For example, local archaeological societies should designate the institution — museum, university or historical society — with which they are affiliated.

The transfer to an archives should be the last phase within a records management system that directs the movement of records as through a pipeline. Transfer should take place in a timely and orderly manner. Materials can be sent either directly from the offices where the records were created or through the association's historian. Each association's plan should include a specific transfer schedule, providing for records to be sent routinely either at certain intervals or at the end of the term of each president. Only those files that are no longer active should be transferred, but as a rule, as files become older their usefulness in the conduct of business decreases. Special projects require a different schedule; transfer should take place when projects are completed.

The records of small local societies and nonincorporated groups require special attention because of the unique information they contain and because they are less likely to be protected by institutionalized policies. Newsletters and other distributions to members are often the only recorded information on some regional activities, particularly in archaeology, and they may be rich sources on trends through the years.

Professional associations are among the main sites of information on the history of anthropology. Their programs, journals, and other publications document the intellectual development of the field, and their records trace what was discussed at different times (whether or not it was ever published) and reflect the multiple influences that shaped the field. Anthropologists as members of associations have both a responsibility and an interest in safeguarding that information.

Case Study: The Society for Medical Anthropology²

In 1987 the Executive Committee of The Society for Medical Anthropology (SMA) passed a motion authorizing the formal setting up of an archival collection of Society papers at the National Anthropological Archives (NAA) at the Smithsonian. The process by which this archives was established and the issues raised by it are of continuing interest as anthropologists and others undertake to preserve the anthropological record. This paper describes the circumstances in which the impetus for the establishment of the collection arose, the founding of the archives, the type of material gathered, and issues pertinent for others involved in the collection of official materials.

Founding and Early History of the SMA

The Society began with an organizational meeting in Washington, DC in 1967. As with many new organizations, some confusion and chance was involved in the way the SMA emerged. The initial impetus was to set up a section of the American Anthropological Association for medical anthropology. The meeting was held during the Annual Meeting of the AAA and included a formal business meeting, the formation of a Steering

Committee, the decision to begin a newsletter, and the planning of programs for the following year.³

This interest in an organization possibly to be affiliated with the AAA was expressed by Hazel Weidman in a letter to the AAA Executive Board, January 15, 1968, in which she described developments in the field:

[There is] wide interest within the membership of the AAA, as well as in related professional specialties and institutions, in a more focused development of medical anthropology . . . Many in the field are concerned with the evolution of disease and systems of care; others are interested in epidemiology and problems of behavior in a health/illness context. Some are involved in developing graduate training programs in departments of anthropology. Their counterparts are working to develop appropriate content in teaching behavioral science in medical settings. Still others are grappling with the theoretical implications of their practitioner-oriented assignments.

By November 1968, committees had been set up on anthropology and nursing, psychiatry, community medicine, pharmacy, dentistry, nutrition, pediatrics, and graduate training programs. During the AAA Annual Meeting in Seattle that year, the Steering Committee met again to find ways to better organize the discipline, and on November 22nd approximately 100 persons attended the first open meeting to discuss problems in organizing the field of medical anthropology.

Further action was necessary to coordinate the committees, and an "Organizing Committee of the Group for Medical Anthropology" was formed.⁴ By July 1969, the Organizing Committee had drafted a constitution, and subscriptions to the *Newsletter* had risen to 325. This constitution was adopted during the business meeting of the AAA in San Diego in 1970.

At that time, a last-ditch effort was made to ensure section status for medical anthropologists within the AAA. However, by the time the motion came to the floor, there was no longer a quorum and no further business could be conducted. Thus, a concerned group moved to set up a separate society: the Group for Medical Anthropology became the Society for Medical Anthropology.⁵

Founders and members were drawn from both the United States and from an international roster of anthropologists and interested medical/health scientists. The specialties represented were diverse, encompassing interests related both to sociocultural and physical anthropology. Close working relationships were established with committees of societies in those fields.

There was a noticeable increase in collaboration between anthropologists and other social scientists and health care practitioners at this time. Many individuals were jointly qualified and had a major influence on both fields of practice. Internationally, there was increased rapprochement between the social sciences and medicine.⁶ Anthropologists worked in communities concerned with public health

issues and education at home and overseas. New patterns of collaboration also developed between sociocultural and physical anthropologists, as well as between anthropologists and health scientists in such fields as nutrition, epidemiology, and human development. Links with the National Institute of Mental Health for the support of training and research in anthropology were strengthened, and specific initiatives provided for advanced training in anthropology for health care providers.

Early Collection of Materials

The start of the *Medical Anthropology Newsletter*, the first edition of which appeared in October 1968 with Hazel Weidman as editor, led to the collection of materials, letters and articles for publication. In addition, the very formation of the Society had necessitated the production of bylaws, records of membership and officers, and official paperwork.

It is unclear what first sparked an awareness that history was in the making and might be lost, but SMA members understood early on that the creation of their Society, along with other special interest sections of the AAA, had historical significance. In 1974, attempts to gather information on the initial years of the Society were set in motion. Hazel Weidman and Lucy Cohen, with the enthusiastic support of Marion Pearsall and others, started the process of consciousness raising among past officers and *Newsletter* editors.

The initiative grew out of the historical interests of those involved and the desire to document what they saw as a transition time in anthropology, when movements toward the development of independent interest groups were occurring and the nature of the AAA was changing. Legal requirements for a formal society to keep records, as well as the sense that with passing years collective memory would be lost, were other spurs to materials collection. There was also a need to communicate ongoing research, and to disseminate materials on teaching medical anthropology and on training programs in the field. These early efforts were initiated by interested individuals and not coordinated by the Society.

Founding the Archives

The first collections were of moderate size. A number of early papers and correspondence (now transferred to the NAA) were deposited in a filing cabinet drawer in the old AAA offices for safekeeping, for want of a more formal setting, and they remained there until recently. Other materials were kept in the files of the editors of the *Newsletter* (Christie Kiefer, Harry Todd, and Julio Ruffini, at the University of California, San Francisco [Medical Anthropology Program]).⁷

Although there was no official movement to collect materials, Lucy Cohen, both as one involved in the early years of the Society and as an ethnohistorian, continued to press for the founding of an archives and to collect pertinent materials out of personal interest. With the assistance of graduate students at Catholic University,⁸ she was able to gather

materials over the years and ensure that some, at least, were not lost. Thus, the position of "Historian" to the SMA gradually evolved. In March 1987, a further effort to collect materials was initiated. All past officers or their families were contacted regarding relevant papers that they might have in their possession. Although this was only about twenty years after the founding of the Society, many documents and papers had already been lost or thrown away.

Discussions were held with James Glenn, senior archivist of the NAA, as to the technical requirements for setting up an archives, and an existing agreement between the NAA and the Society for American Archaeology archives was referred to as a possible model. The NAA was chosen as the repository because it seemed appropriate for the documents of a national society, it held related materials, and its location in Washington made it convenient for anthropologists to visit. Questions of cost did not arise, as the Smithsonian does not charge for storage or materials preservation.

The NAA has extensive experience in the care and preservation of anthropological records, including those of the AAA, the American Association of Physical Anthropologists, the Anthropological Society of Washington, the Society for American Archaeology, and the American Ethnological Society. The papers of many major figures in American anthropology are also there. Materials in the NAA cover academic research interests, public policy issues, and interdisciplinary interests. It was appropriate that the SMA records be housed with these collections of interest and relevance to the Society.

Collecting Materials

Gathering SMA records for archiving was a time-consuming and often frustrating process, especially when it was sometimes discovered that boxes had just been cleaned out and papers thrown away. However, many former officers or their family members provided documents relating to the early days of the Society. Prior to the official opening of the SMA archives, these were sent to the Historian for safekeeping and later were transferred in bulk to the NAA. Efforts were also made to encourage members of societies that had originated as subgroups of the SMA, such as the Council for Nursing and Anthropology, to donate early records to the archives. Documents from the International Health and Infectious Disease Group and others were deposited in the archives, as a result of advertisements in the AAA newsletter.

Materials deposited include such items as general correspondence, minutes, announcements, records, newsletters, budget materials, copies of bylaws, membership lists, and correspondence concerning awards and applications. Collections of papers from individuals closely associated with the Society have also been deposited. Hazel Weidman contributed substantially to the collection, including tapes of the first two meetings and oral history interviews.

The NAA provided recommendations for preparing association materials for deposit. (1) Records should not be split. (2) Related materials should be sent together. (3) Records should include the following information:

who is sending them, the address where he/she can be located, and the office held in the association when the accumulated material was sent. (4) Records should be sent to National Anthropological Archives, MRC 152NHB, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC 20560, and addressed "Attention: Acquisitions — Society for Medical Anthropology."

Issues in Archiving

A question that had to be considered in setting up the archives was the type of materials to be collected apart from official records. It is sometimes hard to distinguish between personal papers and those directly related to the formation of a society, since individual and disciplinary initiatives are often intertwined.

The issue of confidentiality is more problematic. How is sensitive content in papers to be handled? For example, critiques of journal submissions written for review purposes might prove embarrassing to either reviewer or author if made public. Yet such critiques are particularly interesting as examples of trends within the discipline; indeed, they are sensitive for just that reason.

The existing SMA agreement with the NAA states that official papers of the Society are to be submitted after five years, are open to the public after ten, and by mutual consent can remain closed for fifty years if so desired, to preserve confidentiality. At present, reviews of applications for prizes, articles for submission to the journal, and papers concerning appointments come under restricted access. Other ethical issues raised during the course of founding and continuing the archives were: times to ask (or refrain from asking) people for papers, especially in relation to illness or death; appropriate ways of soliciting records; and ways to encourage the deposit of materials that individuals may not consider to be of value historically. The Society needs to continually reexamine what restricted access means in light of the types of records involved and as unforeseen issues emerge over time.

The Future

The collection as it stands is far from complete. It does not include the agendas of meetings, papers given at meetings and symposia sponsored by the SMA, or many miscellaneous items such as newsletter articles. Neither does the archives contain many examples of oral and visual media. It would be useful to have visual records of important lectures and presentations, as well as photographs of officers. Such items would add to the richness of the collection as a source for the history of the discipline, the Society, and the individuals involved.

As part of the continuing development of the archives, the SMA Executive Committee has begun a review of its statement of policy on its records, which will contain suggestions for continuing and expanding the collection.

The formation of an association and its activities over time are processes that reflect the evolution of a discipline. Association records constitute not only a source of technical information regarding the organization but

they also trace collaboration and change within a discipline and the way consensus emerges in the ordering of ideas. The meshing of anthropology and medicine had begun long before the establishment of the SMA, but the emergence of the Society at a particular point in time and its subsequent metamorphoses represent important developments, which are a tribute to the vibrancy of the discipline. Society documents and associated personal papers form a core of materials for the study of the history of medical anthropology, an essential part of the history of anthropology as a whole.

Guidelines for Organizations

Many of the same requirements that hold for professional associations apply to other organizations as well. Policies for determining what is saved and where it will be deposited should be defined. Guidelines should also be in place for transferring records to a permanent repository when they are no longer needed for current business. A specific individual should be assigned this responsibility, with provision made for its orderly transfer to a successor. Where an organization is part of a larger institution, its preservation practices may be determined by wider institutional policies; however, those responsible for the anthropological entity should be cognizant of the needs of the *anthropological* record and ensure that important items not provided for in the institution's guidelines are saved.

Each organization generates records that are unique to it, depending upon its activities, structure, and history. Each one, therefore, needs to establish its own guidelines for what it saves, both for its own purposes and for scholars of the future. In ongoing organizations records are produced continually, and decisions about what to keep, for how long, and where are part of operating procedures. As in the case of associations, the archiving of historical materials should be an integral part of a records retention policy and process. Unlike the situation of individuals, arrangements for archival deposit of an organization's records must take into account an open-ended future.

An organization's documents will include administrative, financial, and other materials that may have little long-term historical interest. Other than items kept for current use and for legal requirements, decisions must be made about which records can be safely discarded. There should be clear guidelines for who makes these decisions, and on what criteria. Such decisions may need to weigh conflicting considerations. For instance, it may be advisable on legal grounds to destroy certain items — sometimes precisely the items that may have greatest historical value. There will always be conflicting demands for limited space, staff time, and other resources, and often there will be conflicting interests.

Organizations also face the issue of where to archive. Should an organization establish its own repository or turn its records over to someone else; if so, to whom? Space, cost, staff skills, and other requirements will be factors, but for most organizations it is probably neither possible nor desirable to develop a separate archives. For some organizations, the choice of repository will be clearcut. University

departmental papers will normally be retained either in the department office or in the university's central archives, while in museums there will usually be an institutional archives. Small corporations such as cultural resource management and consulting firms should designate a repository in the city in which their headquarters are based.

The question of where to deposit records involves more than simply locating an archives willing to accept materials. An organization must decide what history it is part of, whom it serves, and to whom it has commitments. An organization may have multiple identities; thus it will need to determine with which one its records properly belong. In some ways, seeking an archival home for an organization's records is like selecting one's own home — or burial place. Symbolism counts, along with more practical considerations.

Apart from choosing an ideal home for records, there is the very real issue of past and ongoing commitments. It is necessary to strike a balance between the needs of researchers and obligations to others. This is a familiar problem to archivists, but anthropologists need to translate the archivists' expertise into informed decisions that take into account the specific nature of anthropological records. For a research or professional institution, there is a responsibility to ensure access to all who contributed to creating the records or on whose behalf they were created. But there are also concerns of confidentiality and privacy, which especially affect items such as proposal reviews, clinical information, and correspondence containing personal and personnel materials. For academic departments, the issues raised in the Buckley Amendment (Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974) must be addressed.

As in other kinds of historic preservation, long-term curation is a serious consideration. Organizations will have to make judgments about whether the facilities, resources, and professional interest that make an archives seem suitable are likely to exist in the future. Might the repository be seriously affected by future cuts in its funds, or by policy or staff changes? In some cases, permanence may be guaranteed but at a cost, as some repositories may require a financial contribution as a condition of accepting large open-ended record sets.

For all organizations, there will be a trade-off between spending resources for current activities and for tending future history. It is necessary to fit archival needs into overall budgetary and staff planning, and to plan for a future of continuing expansion of records, changing technologies, and changing circumstances. Provision for ongoing support is essential: even where administrations are persuaded to provide resources for setting up archival projects, continuing budgetary and staffing needs will always be vulnerable to other pressures.

Case Study: The Wenner-Gren Foundation⁹

An example of the preservation issues facing independent research or grant-making organizations is provided by Wenner-Gren's experience with confronting the need to archive, discard, or otherwise deal with its own records. This case illustrates the kinds of conditions and problems

likely to be encountered by organizations that are important contributors to the history of anthropology, whether or not they themselves carry out research.

Few anthropologists would dispute that future scholars of the discipline have a stake in the preservation of Wenner-Gren's records. The fifty-year history of the Foundation bears a unique relationship to the history of anthropology because of the special symbiosis that has existed between Wenner-Gren and the discipline. The documentation of that history surely constitutes a key resource for research on the field in general and on the many anthropologists and anthropological topics that have been part of the Foundation's activity. Its records document the development of anthropological ideas, particular research projects, and the professional (and sometimes personal) lives and relationships of individual anthropologists. Wenner-Gren has never had an explicit project for archiving its records, beyond a vague (and seemingly unproblematic) plan to some day "send it all to the Smithsonian". Fortunately, much of the record has survived and is available for archiving. However, numerous questions about how to proceed present themselves.

History and Background

The history of an organization is not only the essential context that needs to be known in order to make sense of its records. It also accounts for which materials have survived (and which have not), where they are, and the form in which they exist.

The Foundation was established in 1941, originally as The Viking Fund, through a gift of Axel Leonard Wenner-Gren, a Swedish industrialist. (The name was changed in 1951 to honor the founder.) The gift was obtained, and the future course of the Fund set, by the first Director of Research, Paul Fejos. Beginning from a two-room office in Rockefeller Center, Fejos oversaw the acquisition in 1945 of a townhouse on New York's East Side and then in 1957 a castle in Austria that became the Foundation's European Conference Center. Programs continued to be created and to grow until Fejos's death in 1963, when his efforts were carried forward by his widow and associate, Lita (later, Osmundsen). Prosperity and expansion until the early 1970s was followed by financial setbacks, which led to the sale of both the townhouse and the castle around 1980. Since then the Foundation has occupied rented offices, at first in rather constricted quarters and since 1990 in larger (but still limited) space.

When the house and castle were sold, many of the Foundation's physical possessions were dispersed: most of its library; the materials created through a casting program for the reproduction of fossil specimens (much of it now housed at the University of Pennsylvania Museum); laboratory, recording, and other equipment (most of it obsolete). Collections of photographs and sound recordings were moved to the new offices, and paper files not in current use were deposited in warehouse facilities. There was no specific plan for what would or would not be kept nor attention to curation, and the orderliness and documentation of stored materials vary considerably.

Coinciding with the 1990 move, we began to inventory the paper holdings (by then, scattered among three warehouses and the main office), with the aim of developing both a retention policy and a strategy for future archiving. Several days spent at the warehouses turned up some gems, such as detailed hand-written notes on significant Board meetings stuck in with old account books, along with petty-cash receipts from the 1950s for sandwiches delivered by the local deli.

What is in the Wenner-Gren Record

As noted above, the disposition of historical materials is an integral part of any record retention policy, which is, of course, governed by many considerations other than historic preservation. Wenner-Gren's policy may be summarized as follows:

Permanent Files

- Certificate of Incorporation
- By-Laws
- Federal and State Tax Status
- Minute books (including committee meeting minutes)
- General ledgers
- Audited financial statements
- Year-end investment custody reports
- Tax Returns (990AR, 990PF, 990T)
- Annual/Biennial Reports
- Board of Trustees and Advisory Council meeting books
- Completed grant files
- Symposia files
- Copyrights, trademarks and permissions files
- Files of historical significance (including discontinued program files)
- Culled personnel files
- Culled declined application files starting in 1989
- Advisory Council and Board of Trustees correspondence files (culled)
- Advisory Council and Board of Trustees curriculum vitae files

Defined Retention Period

Financial and accounting records: 8 years + current year

- paid vouchers
- workpapers and trial balances
- journal entries
- cash receipts
- bank statements and canceled checks
- payroll information (including W-2s and tax reporting records)
- investments records
- 1099s
- cash receipts and disbursements ledgers
- *Current Anthropology* statements (UCP and Editor's office)

Expired contracts: 8 years + current year

- leases
- insurance policies

Personnel files (terminated)

- full file: 8 years + current year

Out-of-scope inquiries: 1 year + current year

General correspondence and in-scope inquiries: 1 year + current year
(Files are culled after retention period and any correspondence of historical or programmatic interest kept as permanent record)

Declined applications: 3 years + current year
(Culled file after retention period kept as permanent record)

As this list of records shows, materials vary considerably in their likely historical interest, but the decision about whether to discard or save may not be obvious. For example, Wenner-Gren had always destroyed declined applications after a year on the advice of legal counsel, but certainly projects turned down may be of as much interest to a future historian of anthropology as those supported. "Out-of-scope" inquiries constitute a massive volume of correspondence, most of which is by definition irrelevant to the Foundations's activity; or is it?

Records concerning programs are of greatest historical value, but they do not survive in discrete, labeled categories. This follows from Wenner-Gren's funding strategy — to operate with a number of diverse, complementary programs, which over time have been fluid and changing. The grants program is the one activity that has continued as a single administrative entity throughout Wenner-Gren's history. The 5,000-plus grants awarded over the years are recorded in files that include documents from initial inquiry through application, award, reports, completion, and followup. Similar files exist for most of the conferences funded through grants, while the major conferences in the International Symposium Program (118 to date) have extensive documentation covering everything from administrative matters to personal communications. Other programs have files of varying completeness and interest: the several publication programs (much of this material was or is in the possession of the various editors); the casting program (including technical records, administrative files, and artifactual material); educational and fellowship programs. Papers of individuals that had been held by Wenner-Gren (Paul Fejos and Geza Roheim) have been deposited in archives separately.

Apart from paper records there are items in other forms, which require special curation. A substantial collection of photographs, taken at conferences or sent to the Foundation by grantees, awaits proper documentation and preservation. In the mid-1980s, an Oral History Program was initiated consisting of video and audiotaped interviews with leading anthropologists, and new interview materials are added regularly. Of particular value is an extensive body of sound recordings

made in a variety of recording media — wire, reel-to-reel tape, and cassette. Beginning in 1946, most lectures, conferences, and meetings administered by the Foundation — including a great deal of informal discussion — have been recorded. These recordings, which have never been transcribed, exist in single copies and in varying condition. A long-term plan has been put in place to copy them for archival preservation and for eventual use by researchers.

The Records of a Journal

The journal *Current Anthropology*, which is sponsored by Wenner-Gren, was based at the institutions of its three successive editors between 1960 and 1993. Most of the papers dealing with editorial matters were located at these institutions. Upon the changes in editorship in 1975 and 1984, no effort was made to retrieve or transfer any records other than those of current business, and the papers were either disposed of or merged with the personal possessions of the (past) editor. With the move of the editorial office from Brunel University (near London) to Washington University (St. Louis) in 1993, a concerted effort was made to preserve portions of the record of this period.

Because the papers to be preserved were of archival interest only, the plan was to transfer them to the warehouse in New York used for Wenner-Gren's inactive materials. The sheer bulk of the accumulated files of eight years of editorial business was daunting (occupying a long wall of filing cabinets), and the costs of packing and shipping had to be considered. It was necessary, therefore, to diligently cull files. The job was carried out by the editorial assistant, following criteria set by the Foundation, and required the equivalent of several weeks of full-time work.

The principle guiding the decision of whether to keep or discard each item was informativeness in relation to bulk. One element of "informativeness" is the uniqueness of the item, so that material for which copies are known or presumed to exist elsewhere was given low priority. As a result, virtually all manuscripts were discarded, while correspondence about them (including reviews) was retained. Items of routine business were disposed of and the non-routine (anthropologically informative) saved; this meant that a judgment as to what is or is not "routine" had to be made in each instance. The decisive question was: if I were a future historian of anthropology, might I conceivably be interested in this?

After culling, the papers retained filled over fifty file boxes. These were sent to the Wenner-Gren offices, where the files will be culled further before depositing them in long-term storage.

There is necessarily an *ad hoc* quality to such a process, and the outcome will always depend to some extent upon the idiosyncracies of the individuals involved. Destruction of valuable materials is always a risk if one can't save "everything"; but neither would we want to save everything even if cost and space were not factors. Such limits are not necessarily a handicap in preservation efforts, as they help to remind us that selecting what to save is never a mechanical job.

Problems and Planning

Wenner-Gren's answer to the question of whether to establish its own archives or turn its records over to someone else will probably be a combination of different alternatives. A decision has been made to keep the records of the symposium program (paper, audio, and photographic) together in an in-house research facility, because of this program's close identification with Wenner-Gren. However, files of other programs now resting in warehouses would benefit from professional handling and will eventually be made available to scholars in some permanent archives.

Where to archive is an issue for the Foundation because its historical record is of value in two rather different ways. It is intimately a part of the history of anthropology, but also part of the foundation world and the history of research planning and philanthropy. Its disciplinary identity would point to an anthropological archives; but Wenner-Gren also has a specific mission to serve the discipline internationally, and its records should not be subsumed under any national entity. At the same time, while it belongs to the private sector, long association with anthropologists makes it uncomfortable in the company of the large private philanthropies. There are also longer-term considerations: will the repository chosen today maintain its facilities and services in the future? What happens to the Smithsonian's archives if its funds are cut in the future, or if its anthropological commitment is compromised? A greater assurance of permanence, however, can be expensive, as a suitable repository may require an endowment as a condition of accepting records.

Organizations like Wenner-Gren, lacking established archival policies and professional staff, need some guidelines for deciding what to do and how to go about it. They need advice on record retention and record disposal. For example, some archivists claim a rule-of-thumb that only about five percent of documents generated should be saved, but how does an organization relate it to its specific situation?

It is also essential to establish an ongoing system that will continue beyond the enthusiasms of particular managers or anniversary years. Initial outlays of budget and staff time will need to be matched by continuing support. Choices in allocating resources between current programs and preservation will be unavoidable, but organizations must plan for a future of continuing expansion of records, ever changing technologies, and changes in anthropology itself.

Summary

- All anthropological associations should develop retention schedules and inform incoming officers of their responsibility to retain pertinent records and transfer them to the designated repository.
- Copies of publications, including journals (and associated records), newsletters, and ephemera, should be systematically preserved.
- All organizations — university departments, museums, government

agencies, research institutions, foundations, and private anthropological firms — should make provisions to save and archive records of relevance to anthropology.

Notes

1. This includes obituaries, which have unfortunately and shortsightedly been eliminated from professional journals. An obituary marks the end of a life, but it also marks a starting point for research on that person's position in the history of anthropology and anthropological theory.

2. This section was written by Lucy M. Cohen and Eluned Schweitzer. All documents cited are in the Society for Medical Anthropology Collections in the National Anthropological Archives.

3. Hazel Weidman, "Follow-Up Report on Organizational Meeting of Medical Anthropologists," December 13, 1967. The members of the Steering Committee included Hazel Weidman, Clifford Barnett, Donald Kennedy, Benjamin Paul, Marion Pearsall, Steven Polgar, Norman A. Scotch, Ailon Shiloh, and Paul White.

4. Members of the Organizing Committee included Clifford Barnett, Ari Kiev, Dorothea Leighton, Charles Leslie, Steven Polgar, Arthur Rubel, Norman Scotch, Otto Von Mering, and Hazel Weidman (chair).

5. *Medical Anthropology Newsletter*, Vol. 2. No. 6, November 1970.

6. The First International Conference on Social Science and Medicine was held in Aberdeen, Scotland in 1967, and a number of early members of SMA were invited.

7. These individuals supported the idea of taping interviews with "key informants" during the AAA meetings. Further plans to record the histories of Society officers and members are in progress. Such oral history should be a part of archived materials.

8. Rita L. Ailinger, Joan M. Roche, and Eluned Schweitzer.

9. This section was written by Sydel Silverman.