

# **Saving the Past: Guidelines for Individuals**

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In the course of a lifetime, an anthropologist generates an extensive array of work-related records. These records are part of an individual's immortality as well as a legacy to colleagues, the profession, and society. Yet in spite of their potential significance, very few anthropologists make provisions for the disposition of their research materials apart from suggesting that they be systematically organized and edited (Jackson 1990:16). Most people who think about their records do so only when they: (1) retire or change jobs and have to move out of their office; (2) no longer have room in their office or can no longer find pertinent records; or (3) complete a project. Others do not think about their documents at all, or do not make decisions about them, leaving arrangements to heirs and colleagues. All too often, the records reside in shoe boxes, stacked folders, and unsorted piles of rapidly deteriorating papers that will be saved or destroyed at the whims of relatives, departmental secretaries, colleagues, janitors, or whoever has to cope with them.

These all-too-common behaviors do not benefit anthropology, nor do they meet professional and ethical responsibilities to disseminate new knowledge and to preserve the data and texts on which conclusions and interpretations are based. The purpose of preserving personal records is to save the collective memory of the discipline, of the peoples with whom anthropologists work, and of society. Unlike thoughts, papers are physically durable, and this gives them special value. As collections of documents, anthropological records are like collections of material artifacts in that they extend the temporal and spatial range of human communication.

Records do not save themselves, however. Rather, individuals and institutions save records; the manner in which they do so affects the records' ultimate disposition and their usefulness for anthropology. Anthropology's records are heterogeneous, complex, and extensive in scope, since researchers tend to keep "almost everything" of possible use to a project. Anthropologists will have to make decisions on what to save, where to save it, and under what circumstances. These decisions have far-reaching ramifications; they will affect future research, the archival community, and probably the groups with whom anthropologists work, who are increasingly viewing anthropological field notes as documents of their histories.



The home office of a senior anthropologist. Although the filing arrangement seems disorderly, these field records were carefully indexed and meticulously maintained. Photo by Robert Leopold 2006.

Leaving the preservation of records to chance is unprofessional. Dealing with the accumulated materials of a lifetime will be a burden to heirs, who may not have the training necessary to make informed decisions, and who will be confronted with the task during a period of stress. Rather, the creators of the records should make the decisions themselves, either during the course of a career or through instructions to a literary executor. Given this responsibility, anthropologists as individuals and as a profession must develop records management strategies.

This paper proposes guidelines to assist individuals in this task. It presents basic information on how archivists treat donated anthropological materials (that is, how they assess, describe, and organize records).<sup>1</sup> It offers advice on how to select an archives or other appropriate repository, and when to transfer documents. To begin, however, we take up the matter of anthropologists' insecurities.

### **The Ambivalent Saver**

Anthropologists are often insecure about their records. As Jean Jackson remarks in her essay "I Am a Fieldnote" (1990), researchers are possessive yet ambiguous about field notes and other records. Her interviewees told her that these records "evoke strong memories and feelings," for they "reveal what kind of person you are." There is "a defensiveness about one's fieldwork not living up to an imagined standard." They are "private" yet "only data." There is "anxiety over loss" since field notes are "valuable, because to replace them is difficult if not impossible." For some anthropologists field notes are "sacred"; for

others, "all but worthless." Yet their "presence increases one's obligations to the profession, to posterity, and to the natives" for they symbolize the anthropological endeavor. It is ironic, therefore, that scholars are so casual about the ultimate disposition of their notes.

Each anthropologist must become his or her own records manager. Decisions on what to retain will be based on an assessment of what one will need oneself in the future, as well as what the people with whom one works and future researchers might need. Ethical considerations, beliefs, and feelings about what one wishes to share with others will be a part of this assessment. These decisions will reflect an evaluation of one's own contributions to the field. No doubt some individuals have had more interesting and more influential careers than others — Benedict's, Boas's, Eggan's, Mead's, or Redfield's "trivia" are more valuable than Professor Nobody's — but an individual is not always the best judge of the significance of his or her papers. It is not always the "Great Women" and "Great Men" who have collected the most valuable and useful data. Moreover, the individual's interaction with other figures in the field may be important.

Anthropologists should not be overly self-conscious about the quality or potential usefulness of their records. This is not to say that some records and musings will not be too personal to share with others; some may contain speculations about people that could be harmful if released or too easily misinterpreted if taken out of context. In some cases individuals change their minds as they grow older or discover errors in their past work. Most individuals will do some editing, eliminating, and altering of their records for personal and professional reasons. However, the less done the better, for what is being preserved may have a range of potential uses in the future. As a general rule, if a record was important enough to produce and use during a professional career, it is important enough to consider saving. It is better to make a marginal notation in a field note stating caveats or providing additional information than to discard the record.

### **Archivists: Society's Preservationists**

Archivists find anthropological records to be similar in form to materials generated by other disciplines, but at the same time unique and somewhat mystifying. Many archivists evaluate and organize anthropological records on the models of other disciplines, and thus they tend to think of saving primarily the core materials of the major practitioners in the field. Anthropologists, on the other hand, have a broader definition of "anthropologist" and "anthropological data" and hence a broader view of what records should be retained and how they should be organized and cross-indexed. Because of these differing views, anthropologists will need to work closely with archivists to better articulate the nature of anthropological materials and the ways they have been used and will likely be used in the future.

Archivists have a responsibility to be selective about the documents that will be housed in their repositories; they would not accept a manuscript collection without appraising its intellectual, historical, or research

value, as well as its quantity, age and physical form. Such evaluation includes consideration of the material as a whole, whether it is conceptualized as a discrete project or as the long-term work of a single individual or organization.

Archivists think of a hierarchy of units when they appraise and later organize materials. The most inclusive unit is the record group or collection, similar to an accession in a museum. Archivists will try to keep a record group intact because individual documents take on additional meaning in relationship to the rest of the items in the group. Within a collection are series, which are distinguished by the attributes of the records. An example in anthropology could be a discrete project, such as the records pertaining to an excavation or a specific study, correspondence or class notes. The documents in a series are maintained as a unit because they pertain to a particular subject, result from the same activity, have a particular form, or are related through their creation, receipt or use.

Series are composed of file units, which can be conceptualized as folders or loose documents. For instance, researchers may keep correspondence in folders identified by individual name, project, or year; each of these folders constitutes a file unit. For archivists the relationship of documents in a file unit is determined largely by the characteristics of the individual documents — their date, subject, and the quantity that can be placed conveniently in a folder.

Archivists have long recognized the necessity of selective retention in order to avoid using limited resources on redundant or relatively unimportant records. Most archives have both staff and space limitations, and thus they are obliged not to accept that which they cannot care for or make accessible. For example, they may not be able to house thousands of linear feet of computer printouts or the mountain of telephone message slips an individual accumulates in a lifetime. Some may want only unique documents, not copies. Others may want the unique document (or record copy) to keep, as well as duplicates for research use. For items on strange materials (toilet paper, napkins, long rolls of paper for genealogical data) the intrinsic value of the form of the document will be weighed against the informational value. Other issues for archival consideration are collection size, completeness, potential growth (as in the case of an ongoing association), and percentage of useful materials. Archivists strive to keep all that is appropriate and necessary, and to do this systematically.

There is no one way to appraise archival materials. Nevertheless, in selecting records for retention, archivists recognize that what they are preserving is information that has enduring historical and/or research value. The Society of American Archivists has published a series of volumes on appraisal, arrangement, and description that anthropologists can use to guide them in deciding what to save and how to save it (e.g., Deiss 1984; Miller 1990; Ham 1992).

Archivists will accept individual documents if they have value, but they prefer entire collections, such as all the records from a project rather than some of them. While some documents may be copies, the collection

as a whole is always unique. The completeness of the documentation in a collection is crucial, however; some records of less value by themselves are retained because they are part of a package. In general, archivists use the following criteria in evaluating material:

**Research Value:** By definition, all anthropological research materials are worthy of retention because they are unique, irreplaceable, and have proven to be useful beyond the life of the creator. However, the intelligibility of the documents is a factor; those in a personal shorthand without a key are of less value than those written in longhand, and illegible documents are worthless.

**Age and Size:** The turn of the twentieth century forms a watershed for the appraisal of records. The older a document, the more likely it will be that the archivist will save it simply because of rarity. For twentieth-century documents, quantity and repetitiveness have become problematic, especially for certain kinds of government records and large-scale surveys. This is more of a problem for sociology, law, medicine, and political science than for anthropology, since its projects are more limited in scope and non-replicable. Normally the larger the quantity, the more selective the archivist must be. However, groups of documents that show action over time are prized.

**Form:** Few archives can afford to store duplicates, especially extensive repetitive files containing both cumulative and primary data. Archivists also feel that certain types of materials, such as correspondence and field notes, contain information more frequently used by researchers than others. The ability of an archives to safely house certain types of materials, such as sound recordings or computer discs, may also be a factor.

**Evidential and Informational Characteristics:** The archivist reviews material for the evidence it reveals about the functioning and activities of the creator. Records are also assessed on the basis of the information they contain on other individuals, places, events, and actions.

**Administrative Value:** Records such as human subject forms, permission forms, and personnel records must be kept for continuing financial, legal, or administrative reasons.

**Repository Collecting Policy:** Any proposed collection needs to fall within the scope, subject matter, and geographical range of the repository.

## **What to Save**

Anthropologists can use the archival criteria listed above to evaluate the records they generate during the course of their careers. Two other methods can also be used. The first consists of a series of questions that professionals can ask themselves about the quality of their materials. The second approach involves a priority listing of the types of materials that are generally retained by archives and used by researchers. This list is based on the collecting guidelines of museums, archives, and library

associations as adapted to anthropology. While Method 1 focuses on records as potential research data, Method 2 concentrates on the types of materials produced.

### **Method 1: Potential Research Value of Records**

- Does the item have actual or potential research value?
- Has everything in the records been published? Do field notes contain information that may be of interest to others?
- Are there laws that govern the retention of the records?
- Does the item shed light on the life and work of the author, another anthropologist, a collaborator, or a respondent? Do items reflect the activities undertaken by the author during the course of his/her career?
- Will the item help others understand how decisions were reached, how projects were originated or planned, the environment in which the creator worked, or motivations, goals, and overall research purpose?
- Is the item unique or a duplicate?
- Do the records have potential educational use?
- Are the records understandable? Are they legible? Are there codes for computer tapes and for quantitative analyses?
- What physical materials were used for the records (e.g. durability of the paper)?

### **Method 2: Types of Material**

This approach uses a tripartite listing of the types of professional materials that archivists have found valuable. Those listed under Priority I tend to be used most heavily by researchers, those in Priority III the least. While all documents are potentially useful, those included in Priority I should definitely be saved. The document types listed do not follow any particular order. The listing simply tries to cover most of the types of material produced by individuals in all anthropological subfields, in both applied and academic activities.

#### **Priority I**

- Correspondence of a professional nature
- Curriculum vitae, resumes
- Certificates, awards, diplomas
- Diaries, journals, reminiscences, memoirs
- Speeches, lectures, presentations
- Grant proposals and preparatory materials, applications, reviews
- Legal paperwork for research, such as ledgers, financial documents, notes, human subjects forms, permission forms for use of photographs, work permits, administrative records, transportation or importation records for specimens
- Research notes, records, and field notes: scrapnotes, field diaries, coding forms, site/survey/object forms, typed notes, daily logs, raw data in any form; all forms of primary and secondary data; laboratory notes
- Transcriptions, texts, interviews, surveys, questionnaires, life

- histories
- Household and census data, observation logs, time trials, respondent notes Maps, charts, diagrams, graphs, lists, genealogies
- Videotapes, audio recordings (with explanatory materials)
- Photographic materials: slides, prints, negatives, movies, transparencies
- Objects collected in field; gifts from collaborators, informants and others; supporting documentation on provenience, provenance, price, maker, use, collection method, native name, materials, date acquired
- Ancillary or special field forms and analyses (e.g., isotopic analyses, pollen data)
- Cumulative data, research analyses, outlines, and other post-field stage materials (including explanatory codes and abbreviations)
- Published manuscripts, unpublished manuscripts, reports
- Dissertation, theses
- Association minutes and proceedings (if officer)
- Class lecture notes and other educational materials, grading books, exams (both as student and teacher)
- Circulars of lectures, classes, workshops, other presentations
- Inventories of estates and wills
- Scrapbooks, clippings, programs
- Card files, indexes and any other materials produced and used in the course of professional activities

#### Priority II

- Final manuscripts of published articles/books, rough or final drafts of manuscripts, page proofs
- Personal correspondence with family and friends that contains no professional information
- Flyers
- Telegrams
- Legal documents, such as yearly contracts
- Photocopies of published articles
- Administrative records if individual was department chair, university administrator, foundation official, committee member, etc. (In general, these records should be transferred to the institutional archives, but duplicates may be retained.)
- Casual calculations, memoranda, or items with only momentary usefulness
- Directives and instructions received, invitations to social events, letters or memos fixing appointments
- Appointment registers, day books, telephone messages
- Property inventories
- Notes in shorthand, scrap paper and worksheets; cryptic notes on readings

#### Priority III

- Duplicates or multiple copies (unless there are substantial changes from original or other new information)

- Greeting cards, thank-you notes
- Personal papers such as insurance policies, mortgages, deeds, abstracts of titles, bank statements, canceled checks, tax forms
- Copies of book order forms and receipts, invoices for books or equipment
- Cash books and accounting statements, payroll deduction slips and authorization, purchase slips, tickets, time books and records, vouchers, warrants (unless these are records of research projects)
- Announcements of meetings, ballots.

The disposition of private libraries — books, photocopies of articles, and offprints (both signed and unsigned) — is a special concern, particularly if the books contain copious marginalia. Most archivists suggest that books be separated from personal papers and transferred to a library. Books annotated, dedicated to the individual, or autographed by the author should be offered to a repository along with the individual's other documents. Rules for including or separating pamphlets and periodicals generally follow those for books. Materials that a library would assign to a vertical file should remain with records, as should drafts and unpublished manuscripts. Most archivists feel that manuscript notebooks, first and subsequent drafts, galleys and page proofs should remain in a collection.

The same rules hold for ephemera. Archivists will ask how relevant the item is to the collection and whether it offers any new information about the person and his/her work or about the profession; if it does, they will retain it. Before discarding any such items, it would be worth inquiring whether they are of interest to a local historical society.

### **Transferring Records**

A basic decision that anthropologists need to make is where and when to transfer records. While there is no formula for selecting the correct repository, some parameters can make the transfer more efficient and logical. While an individual's records could be housed in multiple archives, it is better if his/her personal papers and various research project materials are in a single repository. This does not mean that parts of each person's records will never be found in multiple locations, because administrative and departmental files will be preserved at each place of employment, multi-person research projects will remain at one institution (possibly with copies in individual files), and work for corporations or agencies will remain in their archives.

Essential considerations in choosing a repository are to find one that is permanent, well managed with excellent curatorial care, and financially stable; that prides itself on its access and help to users; and that is already concerned with anthropology and has as an acquisition goal to increase its materials dealing with anthropological subjects. Active use of the repository by researchers is a plus. Archivists work with the concept of collecting fields, the underlying principle being that scholars can best study like or related materials together and that it is more economical for an institution to specialize in certain areas. Thus, anthropological



collections will be greatly enhanced by being placed at institutions that already have holdings in specialized areas.



Anthropological fieldnotes, maps, correspondence, lecture notes and other materials on the loading dock of the National Anthropological Archives. Photo by Robert Leopold 2009.

Many researchers have experienced the frustration of looking for an individual's papers and finding that they are at an institution one would never have associated with that individual. This is not so much a matter of improper choice as it is a lack of a comprehensive finding aid or inventory and lack of communication about what already exists in repositories across the country. Donors should choose a repository that will care for their records, has helpful personnel, and has produced good finding aids and inventories. If possible, the archives chosen should also be one that researchers would associate with the individual because of his/her connection with the institution, its geographical region, or its subject focus. For example, for scholars working in Melanesia, the Melanesian Archive at the University of California, San Diego is a logical choice; for those in ethnomusicology, Indiana University would be appropriate.

The choice of repository will be more difficult for unaffiliated individuals and those who change institutions frequently, move in and out of administrative posts, or participate in numerous joint projects. In the latter case, one can deposit materials either in the archives closest to one partner or at the locale where the work was undertaken. In all likelihood this means that parts of the corpus of records produced by an individual will be scattered, underlining the need for a comprehensive database of anthropological information.

When to transfer records is also an issue; there is no one right time. Individuals can transfer all of their papers at one time, at the end of each project, or in increments. This should be an individual decision that is worked out with the repository. Archives can provide for individuals to have ready access to their materials after transfer, but this access will be controlled by archival policy. Materials should not be transferred if they are needed for current research.

### ***How Should Records Be Organized?***

Archivists respect the integrity of a collection and do not intermingle collections even when they deal with similar topics. They also try to keep a collection's original internal order so that future researchers can understand the logic of the creator. This is called the principle of provenance (*respect des fonds* or the sanctity of the original order).<sup>2</sup> This ordering helps researchers understand events and decision-making processes; the arbitrary reorganization of documents by the archivist could obscure information. Records are the intellectual fingerprint of their creator. In this sense, every manuscript collection is unique, since no two individuals have identical interests, go about things in the same way, or maintain the same kinds of records. This individuality should not be compromised by arbitrary rules of organizing.

Transferring records seems like a daunting task, especially if one has been generating paper for many years. However, records are probably in better shape than one thinks, because most people are able to find things for their own use. However a researcher has his or her materials organized, that system is useful and the archivist would like to know and understand it.

Some archivists prefer that the donor do only minimal ordering of records before sending them to the repository, leaving the job of organization to the archivist. However, given the limited staff of most archives and the increasing volume of materials that can be expected, the more help a donor can provide the more rapidly the transferred records will be made ready for use.

If the decision is made to organize materials before transfer, how should they be organized? Because archivists do not necessarily deal with preconceived arrangement schemes, records do not have to be alphabetic or chronologic or subject-oriented. Some of the ways that records sent to a repository might be ordered are subsumed under the following schemes. Most likely, a combination would be used:

**Date:** chronologically (the simplest method of arranging manuscripts, which shows the relationship between documents and the events to which they pertain and creates a time sequence to a career).

**Type:** correspondence, class notes, research project, etc., internally arranged alphabetically or chronologically.

**Project:** materials from each discrete research project.

**Topic or Subject:** information relating to specific topics such as kinship. (This system may fragment a collection and be difficult to use since a single piece of paper may refer to more than one subject.)

**Media Type:** paper, videotapes, audiotapes, photographs, computer disks.

**Affiliation:** different professional roles, personal information.

**Locale:** materials from different culture or geographic areas.

**Institutional Base:** papers relating to place of employment or affiliation.

Ordering by chronology is almost always used at the document level, frequently at the folder level, very rarely at the series level, and almost never as the framework for the entire body of material. The form of organization by "type of material" refers to a generic description of a document regardless of its date or subject. The basic types used by archivists are: correspondence; diaries, minutes and proceedings; printed material; financial documents; photographic material; literary productions; legal documents; scrapbooks; maps, charts, diagrams, graphs; audio recordings; computer materials.

Photographic materials require special attention. Few archivists have the time or expertise to organize them and to provide the annotation and contextualization that will be needed by future researchers. Slides and photographs should be labeled, preferably with dates, names of people and places, institutions, expeditions or field schools as pertinent, and location of negatives and originals.

Archives will need a records inventory (a summary of all the categories of records that an individual is transferring), which is a prerequisite to the archivist's work. Records are the reflection of an individual's activities, and an inventory provides access to them. Archivists disagree as to whether it is preferable for the individual to produce a finding aid before transfer. Because many archives are understaffed, such an aid may not be ready for several years, thereby limiting the immediate usefulness of records. Moreover, archivists may not have sufficient knowledge to produce cross-indexes by culture, site, or time period. On the other hand, archivists are trained to produce finding aids while anthropologists are not. This issue should be discussed with the archivist in the chosen repository. In any case, a basic inventory will probably be needed for legal transfer, especially for any charitable contributions with monetary value.

No simple guidelines can be offered for preparing finding aids and inventories since each record group is unique, but some principles apply to all. Anthropologists need to let the archivist know if the records in a group have all been retained (for example, in a project that involved more than one individual), whether certain records were accidentally lost or destroyed, and where other parts may be held. In addition, archivists need certain information to begin to process (i.e. accession) records. The donor will need to supply as much as possible of the following: title of archival unit; name of individual or organization; dates

of material; profession (subdiscipline, etc.); place of residence; nature of records (manuscripts, field records, cumulative data, maps, letters); inclusive dates of records; estimated linear feet; overview of the contents (by series if any); conditions and restrictions on accessibility; finding aid if available.

Certain archives may also require special inventories. For example, the Archives for Traditional Music at Indiana University requests information on the contents and physical form of the recording, a separate index of each tape, and a contents description to provide basic information about the circumstances of the recording — date, location, culture group, languages used, names of performers, musical instruments, and genres. Special inventory requirements should not deter anthropologists unduly from archiving their materials, however, as field records are likely to contain this information and archivists are always ready to work with donors as needed.

### ***Ethical Responsibilities: Conditions of Accessibility***

Saving anthropology's records involves ethical considerations aside from the responsibility for preserving the information they contain. Each anthropologist should consider both access and confidentiality issues (as C. Fowler and Estroff discuss in their papers) and plan for legitimate access before transferring papers. The scholar who gathered or generated the materials should review them to note any sensitive items. Not to be overlooked, however, is the fact that situations change; what is sensitive at a given time may not be later and vice versa. Thus, excessive restrictions are inadvisable. For example, when William Kelly first published *Cocopa Ethnography* (1977) the Cocopas asked that certain photographs not be used to illustrate the work. Recently, however, the tribal council has requested that the book be reprinted and that the previously excluded photographs be included as a historic record for the people. In general, the same criteria used in publishing materials should apply to access. The needs of future researchers and members of the group are important, but specific decisions will be based on the type of record and the original research purpose. Following good judgment and the ethical statements of associations regarding informed consent, privacy, and welfare of subjects should avoid most problems.

The archivist's goal is to save materials and to make them available for use, that is, to provide access to as many potential users as possible. Thus, archivists will want to minimize unnecessary donor restrictions that may be difficult to administer, and to retain the right to veto individual acquisitions and the conditions or restrictions under which they are acquired.

There are two common types of access restrictions: a specified time period, and limitation to scholars. In general, archivists prefer not to restrict access to a donor's exclusive use, or to assign literary rights to papers. Because archivists dislike unequal access they are usually reluctant to accept stringent conditions (such as donor authorization of selected researchers) unless there is no other way to obtain the materials. Restrictions that apply to a specific time period are relatively easy to administer; those without a time limit are a problem. Thus, it is

best to specify in the deed of transfer a date on which all materials will eventually be opened. The duration of the restriction is important — restrictions for 100 years are generally unacceptable. It is also wise to allow some discretion to the archivist in case privacy laws or other circumstances change; in fact, archives may demand this flexibility.

A difficult situation can arise when access is limited to "serious researchers" or "scholars." Do these definitions include only those with graduate degrees, students, journalists, avocational researchers? By using such definitions, anthropologists could be denying access to the people with whom they have worked. While anthropologists wish to ensure that records are used ethically and honestly, this does not mean that they should specify that no one can ever look at them. Donors should grant permission to researchers and to the institution to make copies, and permission for the institution to donate copies to other research and educational institutions (especially those serving the peoples with whom the materials are concerned). Private institutions may limit access any way they choose, but *ad hoc*, capricious determinations can lead to charges of unfair treatment. A potential donor should review the receiving institution's definition of access before donating materials.

With respect to copyright, the donor either needs to grant permission to other researchers to quote a given number of lines/paragraphs/pages (as appropriate) without having to obtain permission, or else to specify that passages may be quoted only with the permission of the author or copyright holder. Such instructions should be stated in the instrument of transfer and also discussed with the archivist, since laws relating to intellectual property rights may change.

### ***The Legal Transfer of Records***

When scholars transfer their records (through gift, bequest, or purchase), they freely transfer ownership of the physical records to the repository in question. They do not automatically transfer copyright unless this is so stated in writing. The legal characteristics of a gift are a clear offer, acceptance, and delivery; donations are gifts, and title to the property passes from the giver to the recipient. Transfer can be accomplished through an exchange of letters that includes a clear offer, its terms, and acceptance. Archives have the right to refuse property. Thus, a donor should always discuss the transfer of papers with a repository beforehand. Moreover, in cases where the records to be transferred have potential monetary value, the donor should discuss estate planning with an attorney to consider the various forms of lifetime transfer or testamentary transfer and their possible tax advantages. The donor is also advised to confer with relevant personnel from the chosen repository about the tax implications of such gifts.

Donors will need a contract, signed by both parties, to transfer papers. The receiving archives will need to know that donors have clear title to the materials, which is especially important when heirs are transferring papers. The contract should cover:

- Identification of parties, including names and addresses of donor, creator if different, and recipient.
- Preamble giving the reason for the agreement (the wish to make records accessible to researchers, the desire to ensure better conservation of documents, etc.), including the nature of the deposit. If the materials are going to a public university/museum and hence would become public property, it should say "for the purposes of deposit at the archives of X university." If the university has a private foundation that accepts donations from private sources on behalf of the university, this should be specified in the deed.
- Nature of contract (donation-bequest-sale) with dates of transfer of title and property. This information may be important for tax purposes, especially if the transfer will take place over a period of years.
- Description of archival-accession unit and its contents (the more detailed the better), including who created or collected the material, its volume, and inclusive dates of material. (Some of this information can be included as an appendix.)
- Statement of ownership for the physical documents themselves.
- Price (if any).
- Terms (especially if transaction involves a loan).
- Copyright ownership, including an indication of who owns the copyright to the intellectual property and for how long. (It is possible to transfer the physical property to the archives while reserving the copyright for the donor, or the copyright can be transferred to the archives or to the public at large.)
- Access conditions (access to records or restrictions on use, which should include time or content or both, and to whom the restrictions apply). Statements should be clear and unambiguous, and they should describe type of material to be restricted (if any); the authority for the restriction; the duration, either as a fixed period of years or as a contingency of an event; and who can lift the restriction.
- Management of archival unit (including right to dispose of parts later and whether the donor or heirs must be consulted). This should also contain a statement of who can impose and lift restrictions, such as temporary waiver/closure or permanent opening (by the donor, the donor's designee or the archivist).
- Conservation of unit.
- Provisions to cover subsequent gifts (important for incremental acquisition of materials or for acquisition of records of ongoing institutions) so a new deed does not need to be prepared each

time.

- Special privileges (such as continued access to one's own materials and any special conditions or privileges). This can also include a statement of revocation rights by which the donor could withdraw the donation.
- Amendments (means to amend the deed if necessary without having to engage in further legal transactions).
- Reassessment (indicating whether the archivist can reassess the materials after a certain period of time, and transfer, exchange, or discard any part of the collection).

All of these matters should be discussed with the representative of the receiving institution and a professional archivist before a transfer takes place. It is always best to keep restrictions to a minimum.

### ***The Literary Executor***

Archivists, librarians and other information specialists can help a scholar retain and make accessible a lifetime of work, but someone must have the legal ability to undertake this responsibility after his or her death. Every individual therefore needs to write a will that names a literary executor and an alternate and to provide guidelines for the disposition of professional records. Not to do so creates a burden on heirs, invites unnecessary legal activity, and may rob the profession of its heritage.

An executor is an individual named in a will to administer an estate. A literary executor administers that portion of the estate related to intellectual property. Such administration would include the granting or denying of permission to publish, reprint or cite the writings of the individual, as well as disposing of the individual's personal papers and records according to the terms of the will. (See West Publishing [1984] for a more detailed outline of the duties of an executor.)

Before naming an executor, one should determine whether the individual is willing to serve in this capacity. Ideally, the executor should be a person who is knowledgeable about the researcher's works and acquainted with the general nature of intellectual property issues. While the literary executor can call on professionals to assist in the execution of duties, he or she alone is the ultimate decision maker about the administration of the estate. Because the executor must file an inventory of all property in the estate with the court, it is important to provide him or her with at least an outline of all professional records, particularly where monetary value may be attached to them. The executor will have to pay certain administrative costs, and he/she is allowed reasonable compensation by the estate for services performed.

Ideally, one should compose a letter of instruction or intent for the executor, separate from the will, so that all that is required for the disposition of records is the final arrangements for transfer. It is best if one has already identified an appropriate repository and has made at

least tentative arrangements with it to accept the papers. Because such instructions can never cover all questions that might arise, however, the literary executor should be an individual who is knowledgeable enough about one's activities and about the general disposition of records to make informed decisions. The executor should have some freedom and flexibility, because presumably there will be a lapse of time between arrangements for transfer and actual transfer and in this period some circumstances will undoubtedly change.

Because it is important for the future of anthropology that significant records be saved appropriately, all anthropologists need to think seriously about their own papers. Individuals beginning a career have the luxury of creating a system of records management for themselves without the necessity of simultaneously examining a lifetime of documents. If young professionals can establish an inventory and organizational scheme that allows continuous updating and if they rigorously follow their own records review schedule, the task of organizing records should not be overwhelming. It will become a habit, integrally related to the activity of creating the documents.

Senior anthropologists, however, face an entirely different prospect. As they contemplate retirement, they are also trying to respond to the issues raised in this paper with respect to their own records — a daunting task. Many think they need to embark upon complicated organizing plans and to raise funds for this purpose. This is not necessary. Instead, these individuals should prepare a "guide for the archivist" that explains what kinds of materials are in their records and how they are basically ordered, and they should place papers in files with explanations attached. If materials come to an archives in this form, users will be able to make sense of them immediately, even if the archivist has not yet been able to completely process them. It is also neither necessary nor helpful to history to "clean up" the record. It is critical that the records of senior researchers not be lost, so that the legacy of their work and lives is retained and used in the future.

Beyond the needs of the discipline, anthropologists can help archivists to preserve collective memories. In the 1950s, a classic archival statement expressed the commonly held view that the value of records is based on "the entire documentation of society on the matter to which the information relates" (Schellenberg 1956:277). Since 1970, however, social historians have faulted archivists for neglecting to collect records of groups outside the mainstream of American life (e.g., Miller 1981). Kenneth Foote (1990) has recently taken this argument further by arguing that archives err in favor of preserving the records of the dominant at the expense of the less powerful. Given that anthropologists have traditionally worked with less powerful groups, retention of anthropological materials can help rectify this situation. These records are irreplaceable, and anthropologists must help archivists understand their richness and evidential value. Our individual and collective efforts to document and understand the cultures and societies of people around the world would be greatly enhanced by collaboration with those whose profession it is to save socially important information and make it available for future use.



In order to accomplish the preservation of anthropology's records, synergism between the anthropological and the archival communities is vital. Archivists can be enormously helpful in proposing solutions to the records management problems confronted by anthropologists. Likewise, because anthropological records document not only the discipline and its members but also the diverse peoples they study, archives will be significantly enhanced by their presence. Each group will benefit from collaboration, and the ultimate beneficiary will be society as a whole.

### **Summary**

- It is the professional responsibility of anthropologists to ensure that their records are preserved in a usable and ethical manner for future generations.
- All anthropologists should make a will, appoint a literary executor, and specify their wishes for retention and disposition of their papers.
- Anthropologists should form partnerships with archivists to further the education of anthropologists about archival methods and that of information specialists about the special nature of anthropological records and disciplinary needs.

### **Notes**

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1. We have based our suggestions and our understanding of archival technique on readings of archival theory and methodology, discussions and consultation with archivists, and our experiences working with archives as an anthropologist (Parezo) and as a professional librarian (Person).

2. This does not mean, however, that an archivist will not refile a piece of paper that has obviously been misfiled.