

STATUS AND AMBITIONS OF THE IUSSI ARCHIVE

David Nash has asked me for an inventory of the IUSSI Archive, certainly a useful exercise. At the same time, I take this opportunity to report to the worldwide community of insect sociobiologists on the present status of your archive and where I hope it is going.

In 1991 the North American Section of IUSSI established an archive. The first Archivist was William L. Nutting, who served until his death the following year. In the absence of parallel archives in other sections, the NAS archive functioned in large part as an IUSSI-wide facility. The 2002 international congress in Sapporo, Japan formalized this arrangement by approving a motion from the NAS to establish an IUSSI-wide archive. Without changing what I was doing, then, I became the IUSSI Archivist and remain so today.

There are still some minor loose ends arising out of this transition, but these are matters for the NAS membership to decide.

The archive is a decidedly modest affair, occupying a single file drawer in my office. The bulk of the material is biographical, placed in 71 named files, mostly of living persons.

Most files contain nothing more arcane than curricula vitarum, statements of research interests and a few photos. However, some are of more pointed historic value. In particular, I have made it my business to elicit statements from various individuals about their involvement and perception of particular episodes in the growth of our discipline. To date these comprise personal communications from R. Craig, R.H. Crozier, B. Hölldobler, S.A. Kolmes, K.G. Ross, W.A. Shear, P.S. Ward, N.A. Weber, A.M. Wenner, M.J. West-Eberhard and D. Yanega. The intent is to capture memories that might otherwise be lost, and these may well be the most valuable part of the archive.

There is more to a scientist's life than just her/his experimental work and research reports. Accordingly, the archive retains such things as personal newsletters and popular articles when these come my way. As an example, W.E. Kerr sends me his annual year-end newsletter and sometimes his popular writings on conservation and politics, which I am happy to preserve in his file.

I am a believer in autobiography. Everyone should write hers/his at least once, and many of us have occasion to write autobiographical essays more than once for different readerships.

My own file contains three such pieces. And the archive was very pleased to receive E.A. McMahan's unpublished book-length *Heart and Nerve and Sinew*, written for her own family but certainly of much broader interest. (Let me remind you that Charles Darwin's autobiography originated in just this fashion.)

If you have an autobiographical essay that you are willing to put on public record, please send it. In addition, it is prudent to archive some published biographical articles that might not become widely distributed.

The archive does not aspire to be the repository of personal

papers. These are commonly voluminous and belong more properly in or close to the individual's home institution. Accordingly, I take a keen interest in where personal papers are deposited, but generally avoid receiving them. However, sometimes the archive takes on this kind of responsibility. At present, we have substantial files of correspondence from A.E. Emerson to D.H. Kistner, A.E. Emerson to E.A. McMahan, and K. von Frisch to E.A. McMahan. In time this material may go to larger archives with substantial Emerson and Frisch material, but for now it is safeguarded and available to scholars.

There is a small amount of material that does not belong in any named file. Some of this pertains to insect sociobiology as a taught subject, and I am very much interested in receiving outlines of university courses about social insects.

Although the archive has never seen itself as an IUSSI institutional repository, some such documents are of historic interest. As an example, I retain a copy of this year's correspondence within the Hamilton Award committee. I should note that this file remains sealed until the IUSSI determines when it may be made public, if ever. I can always shred it if instructed to do so.

Where do we go from here? In much the same directions, and slowly. I will continue to keep my eyes open for important stories that need to be written and will press the right people to write them.

If you are in possession of a small file of archival material relating to insect sociobiology that you believe calls for preservation, feel free to put it in the mail to me. If it is large, let us consult.

One much more demanding initiative that I would very much like to undertake concerns photographs of persons, places and events.

Electronic archiving now makes it possible to preserve and duplicate great numbers of images at virtually no financial cost (although at considerable cost in labour). This will require some thought and planning.

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