

Register to the Records of the
American Ethnological Society

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1975-76

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2004

National Anthropological Archives
Smithsonian Institution

INTRODUCTION

The American Ethnological Society is the oldest anthropological association in America. It has been interested in publishing and promoting study of different cultures in the Americas from its founding in 1842 to the present.

The collection consists of seven linear feet of material.

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

The records of the American Ethnological Society (AES) document its activities from its founding in 1842 through the mid-1960s.

The early years of the AES (1840s to 1880) are documented through correspondence, newspaper clippings, and proceedings. The bulk of the collection relates to the administrative functions of the AES from its reorganization in 1906 through 1965 including changes to the constitution and the elections of officers. The offices of Secretary-Treasurer and Editor are well documented through correspondence and reports. There is also a significant amount of correspondence to and from members, financial records, and information on the AES' interactions with other organizations such as the American Anthropological Association and the New York Academy of Sciences.

HISTORY OF THE AMERICAN ETHNOLOGICAL SOCIETY

The American Ethnological Society was founded in 1842 by Albert Gallatin, Secretary of the Treasury under Thomas Jefferson and founder of New York University. Early members were doctors, lawyers, businessmen and included Henry Schoolcraft, William Prescott and Theodore Dwight. Meetings were usually held at the home of the President and accounts of missionaries and explorers, who were “corresponding” members, were read. Local papers frequently covered these meetings. The Society published three periodicals in its early years including Transactions which first appeared in 1845. Interest in the Society declined after the Civil War. In 1906 a group of professional anthropologists led by Franz Boas joined the Society and reorganized it, adding the Office of Editor. Since then, the Society has been very active and has had a strong publications program, beginning with a linguistic series begun by Franz Boas. The Society holds annual meetings, usually in the spring at which prominent anthropologists present their findings. In addition to Franz Boas, the Society has included among its members such famous anthropologists as Ruth Benedict, E. Adamson Hoebel, Margaret Mead and Ward Goodenough.

SERIES DESCRIPTIONS

EARLY RECORDS

1840'S – 1880. Five inches.

Correspondence, financial records, newspaper clippings, notes, and ethnological materials including hand drawn maps, vocabularies and hieroglyphics.

MEETINGS

1910 – 1964. Ten inches. Arranged chronologically.

Correspondence and minutes from Board of Directors meetings and annual meetings (including programs).

OFFICERS REPORTS

1925 – 1964. Five inches. Arranged chronologically.

Annual reports of the officers of the Society, primarily of the Secretary-Treasurer and Editor.

ELECTION RECORDS; CONSTITUTIONS; AND OFFICER LISTS
1917, 1941, 1949-1959. Five Inches. Arranged chronologically.

Correspondence and voting records pertaining to constitutions and amendments to the constitution (1917, 1952, 1959). Election materials including ballots, lists and correspondence on nominations

OFFICERS CORRESPONDENCE
1924 - 1964. Fifteen inches. Arranged chronologically.

Correspondence of the officers of the Society – files are more complete for some years than others. The bulk of the material relates to the office of Secretary-Treasurer and concerns issues such as publications and membership.

MEMBERSHIP
1862-1864, 1910, 1920, 1930-1960. Fifteen inches. Arranged chronologically.

Consists of membership lists and dues related correspondence. Includes a card file of members as of 1960.

PUBLICATIONS
1934- 1962. Five inches. Arranged chronologically.

Correspondence of editors Marian Smith, Verne Ray and Viola Garfield including contracts with the publisher, J.J. Augustin, and sales statements.

FINANCIAL RECORDS
1902 – 1962. Five inches. Arranged chronologically.

Financial records and statements from various years. Majority of the records are from the years 1950 – 1960. Records include bank statements, checkbooks, cancelled checks, mortgage held on property in Ogden, Utah and records of AT&T stock held by the Society.

MISCELLANY
1916-1957. Five inches.

Miscellaneous reports of the Society including correspondence with and publications of other associations such as the American Anthropological Association and the New York Academy of Sciences.

FOLDER LIST

Container

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