

Register to the Records of the
Institute of Social Anthropology
Smithsonian Institution
1942–1952

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1974

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National Anthropological Archives
Smithsonian Institution

INTRODUCTION

The Institute of Social Anthropology was an autonomous unit of the Smithsonian Institution which existed from 1942-1952. The objectives of the Institute of Social Anthropology were to work in cooperation with the institutions in certain Latin American republics which had requested assistance in anthropological work; the Institute of Social Anthropology had two main objectives:

- 1) Training of personnel in the concepts and techniques of anthropology;
- 2) Acquisition of a body of scientific information concerning the basic rural populations that is fundamental to any program affecting Latin Americans as well as to science and education.

The research provided an understanding of the manner of living, agricultural systems in relation to environmental factors, economic life, crafts and industries, food habits, health status, social organization, religion, language, literacy, and basic attitudes and interests of the people. From a scientific point of view, these studies revealed the most recent changes and the factors making for change in cultures that in many instances can be traced back more than 2,000 years through archaeology and post-conquest written history. From a practical point of view, the findings were indispensable to any action programs, both governmental and private, concerned with matters of health, education, soil erosion, commercial development, colonization, marketing, and so on.

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

These documents reflect the correspondence and other office records of the Institute of Social Anthropology of the Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C. Included are annual reports, correspondence, memoranda, printed material, and financial records that cover the period of the Institute's existence 1942-1952. The majority of the material relates to the office files of the Institute and its correspondence with its social scientists in Brazil, Colombia, Mexico, Guatemala, and Peru.

Also included are documents that relate to the Institute of Social Anthropology and its relations with the State Department. There is also correspondence concerning the ISA and Acta Americana, Bollingen Foundation, Guggenheim Foundation, National Indian Institute, Pan American Institute of Geography and History, Rockefeller Foundation, UNESCO, Wenner-Gren Foundation, Inter-American Society of Anthropology and Geography, Escuela Nacional de Antropología e Historia, Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia, Escola Livre de Sociologia e Política, Instituto de Antropología Social.

Other material in the National Anthropological Archives that relates to the Institute of Social Anthropology can be found among the correspondence files of the Bureau of

American Ethnology 1907-1950, consisting of fifty linear feet files in one continuous alphabet in ninety seven boxes.

HISTORY

The Institute of Social Anthropology was established under the directorship of Julian H. Steward on September 8, 1943, as an autonomous unit of the Bureau of American Ethnology. Its purpose was to set up cooperative Institutes of Social Anthropology for scientific research and training in certain Latin American countries, each working under the guidance of the Smithsonian Institution. This program was carried out under the auspices of the Interdepartmental Committee on Scientific and Cultural Cooperation in Latin American of the U.S. Department of State, and was financed by funds transferred from the State Department to the Smithsonian Institution. Dr. Steward directed the Institution of Social Anthropology until September, 1946, when he was succeeded by George M. Foster, who continued as director until the Institute was abolished in 1952.

At its outset, the ISA staff consisted of eight social scientists (four social anthropologists, two cultural geographers, a linguist, and a sociologist) stationed in Brazil, Colombia, Mexico, and Peru (for a short time in 1950 a station was established in Guatemala, but it was discontinued the same year for lack of funds). Their duties consisted in instructing local students (in collaboration with Latin American universities and other institutions) in social science research techniques through classroom, laboratory, and field situations, and in assisting with publication projects. (See Ms. 4646, Box 1, Folders 1 & 2, for more detailed information as to ISA personnel, projects, and publications for each year.) In 1948, the budget was cut to allow for only six scientists. The ISA continued in this capacity until 1949, when the Inter-departmental Committee on Scientific and Cultural Cooperation was abolished, and it was placed under the Division of International Exchange of Persons, another State Department Committee. The ISA did not form an organic part of this new program, and the State Department decided to terminate its support as of December 31, 1951.

Following this time, the ISA integrated its activities with the Institute of Inter-American Affairs. In the spring of 1952, the IIAA requested that all ISA personnel who so desired be permanently incorporated into the IIAA organization. This terminated the activities of the Institute of Social Anthropology as such.

SERIES DESCRIPTIONS

SERIES 1: ANNUAL REPORTS AND ADMINISTRATIVE RECORDS
1942-1952 (0.25 linear feet) Arranged chronologically

Included are annual reports, correspondence, memoranda, and printed material. The records place emphasis on explanations and justification for the Institute of Social Anthropology and its programs in Latin America. Includes the correspondence relating to the Point IV legislation and the integration of anthropology with Point IV. In addition are membership lists of Latin American Committees through which ISA works and a copy of

an ISA list entitled "Who's Who in Latin American Anthropology." There exists information on the Institute of Social Anthropology Project Proposals concerned with cooperation in research and teaching in social anthropology with the various institutes in other Latin American countries. Concludes with a general mailing list from the Institute to Latin Americanists in both history and anthropology.

SERIES 2: ADMINISTRATIVE AND PERSONNEL RECORDS
1942-1952 (0.5 linear feet) Arranged chronologically

Included are correspondence, memoranda, bulletins, rosters, releases, notifications and printed matter. The records emphasize the operational framework of the Institute of Social Anthropology. Includes correspondence relating to personnel instructions, allowances, salaries and leaves, authorizations, loyalty data, various memoranda to all field personnel, permission to publish releases, and personnel action. In addition are personnel reports and detailed job descriptions. Of import are the reclassification personnel statements of the director of the Institute of Social Anthropology. Concludes with recruitment directives.

**SERIES 3: MISCELLANEOUS RECORDS RELATING TO THE STATE
DEPARTMENT COMMITTEES UNDER WHICH ISA OPERATED**
1946-1951 (0.5 linear feet) Arranged chronologically

Included are announcements, correspondence, memoranda, messages, notes, notices, summaries, instructions, surveys, and printed matter. The records emphasize the role of the Institute of Social Anthropology and its relations with the State Department. Included are the correspondence relating to the Interdepartmental Committee on Scientific and Cultural Cooperation as well as its financial records and miscellaneous reports. Concludes with the State Department File on the Division of Exchange of Persons which contains correspondence with the Director of the Institute of Social Anthropology.

SERIES 4: INSTITUTE OF SOCIAL ANTHROPOLOGY, CORRESPONDENCE
1942-1952 (4.5 linear feet) Arranged alphabetically - material within each folder arranged by date

Included are correspondence, printed matter, requests, notifications, plans, and memoranda.

SERIES 5: AREAL SUBJECT FILE
1942-1952 (1.0 linear feet) Arranged alphabetically by country - material within each folder arranged by date

Included are correspondence, agreements, announcements, briefs, reports of the Institute Conventions, decisions, memoranda, publicity notes, and printed material as they deal with the Institute of Social Anthropology, 1942-1956. Includes Bolivia; Brazil; Chile; Colombia; Costa Rica; Ecuador; Guatemala; Mexico; Old World (China); Panama; Peru; Venezuela; Washington, DC.

SERIES 6: SUBJECT FILE

1944-1952 (0.25 linear feet) Arranged alphabetically by research foundation - material within each folder arranged by date

Included are correspondence, circulars, bulletins, notifications, instructions, plans, resolutions, and printed matter. The records emphasize the various research foundations and their correspondence with the Institute of Social Anthropology. Included are Acta-Americana; Bollingen Foundation; Guggenheim Foundation; National Indian Institute; National Research Council; Pan American Institute of Geography and History; Rockefeller Foundation; UNESCO; and the Wenner-Gren Foundation.

SERIES 7: ACCOUNTS AND FISCAL RECORDS

1946-1952 (0.75 linear feet) Arranged chronologically and partially by particular country

Included are correspondence, allotments, awards, bids, commissions, contracts, directives, endorsements, instructions, journals, ledgers, notes, receipts, tabulations, and vouchers of the Institute of Social Anthropology. The records contain several folders on the Institute of Inter-American Affairs, 1950-1952 and provide information regarding its relationship with the Institute of Social Anthropology.

SERIES 8: BUDGET ESTIMATES AND RECORDS

1944-1951 (1.25 linear feet) Arranged chronologically by subject

Included are correspondence, allotments, financial estimates, journals, ledgers, payrolls, tabulations, vouchers, printed matter, directives, and instructions.

FOLDER LIST

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